

# Open Academy

## Search Policy

<b>Policy Type:</b>	<b>Academy Policy</b>
<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Governors Transition Committee</b>
<b>Date Approved by LGB:</b>	<b>16/03/2026</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>March 2028</b>
<b>Person Responsible:</b>	<b>Principal</b>

## Summary of Changes

The policy has been amended as follows.

<b>Page Ref.</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Date of Change</b>
All	All	Brand new Academy policy	March 2026

## **General Policy Roles and Accountabilities**

The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) is accountable for all policies across its Academies. All policies, whether relating to an individual Academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our ethos and values as articulated in our prospectus. We are committed to the provision of high-quality education in the context of the Christian values of service, thankfulness and humility where individuals are valued, aspirations are high, hope is nurtured, and talents released.

A Scheme of Delegation for each Academy sets out the responsibilities of the Local Governing Body and Principal. The Principal of each Academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Academy Trust.

All employees of the Academy Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

## **Purpose of this Policy**

At our secondary school, we are committed to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where every student can thrive. As part of our DNEAT Search Policy, we aim to balance the need for safety with the rights and dignity of all members of our school community. Central to this approach is our core value of **RESPECT**—respect for ourselves, for others, and for the learning environment. This means that any searches conducted are carried out fairly, sensitively, and only when necessary, ensuring students are treated with dignity and understanding at all times. By upholding RESPECT, we foster trust, promote positive behaviour, and maintain a secure school where everyone feels valued and protected.

1.1 This policy sets out how Open Academy uses screening, searching and confiscation to:

- Safeguard pupils, staff and visitors
- Prevent harm and criminal activity
- Maintain a calm, safe and orderly learning environment

1.2 The policy reflects current statutory guidance, including:

- DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance
- DfE Use of Reasonable Force
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

1.3 This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance and Visitors Procedures

1.4 This policy applies to pupils:

- On academy premises
- During off-site activities and educational visits
- While travelling on academy-arranged transport

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## **2. Key Principles**

- Safeguarding is always the priority
  - Actions are lawful, proportionate and reasonable
  - Pupils are treated with dignity and respect
  - De-escalation and trauma-informed approaches are used wherever possible
  - Decisions are recorded clearly and transparently
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### 3. Definitions

#### 3.1 Prohibited Items (Statutory)

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco products, vapes and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any item likely to be used to cause injury, commit an offence or damage property

#### 3.2 Academy-Banned Items

The following items are banned by Open Academy and reviewed annually:

- Laser pens
- Aerosols
- Non-permitted electronic devices
- Any item deemed unsafe or disruptive

#### 3.3 Screening

The use of non-intrusive methods (e.g. metal detector or knife wand) to check for prohibited or banned items.

#### 3.4 Searches

- **Search with consent:** Conducted with the pupil's agreement
- **Search without consent:** Conducted only where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a prohibited item

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### 4. Screening

4.1 Open Academy may screen pupils for weapons or banned items using hand-held or walk-through detectors.

4.2 Consent is not required for screening.

4.3 Pupils who refuse screening may:

- Be refused entry to the academy, and/or
- Receive a behaviour sanction

4.4 Screening:

- Does not involve physical contact
  - Is carried out by trained staff only
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## **5. Searching**

### **5.1 Searches With Consent**

- May be carried out for any item
- The reason for the search must be explained to the pupil
- A second adult should be present where reasonably possible

### **5.2 Searches Without Consent**

5.2.1 A search without consent may only be carried out where there are reasonable grounds to suspect possession of a prohibited item.

5.2.2 Who may search:

- The Principal, DSL or authorised staff (LDA, RRO, SRI, JCL, CHA)
- Same biological sex as the pupil (unless urgent risk)
- Another adult present where practicable

5.2.3 How searches are conducted:

- Only outer clothing (e.g. coat, blazer, shoes) may be removed
- Bags, pockets and possessions may be searched
- Intimate searches are not permitted
- Reasonable force may be used only where absolutely necessary

### **5.3 Exceptional Circumstances**

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm:

- Same-sex or second-adult requirements may be waived
  - Full written justification must be recorded on CPOMS after the event
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## **6. Confiscation**

6.1 Staff may confiscate prohibited or academy-banned items.

6.2 Confiscated items may be:

- Returned to parents or carers
- Retained for a set period
- Disposed of safely

- Passed to the police

6.3 The following must always be referred to the police:

- Knives or weapons
  - Illegal drugs
  - Stolen items
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## **7. Electronic Devices**

7.1 Electronic devices may be confiscated where academy rules are breached or safeguarding concerns arise.

7.2 Staff must never intentionally view suspected indecent images of a child.

7.3 Any device suspected of containing illegal or harmful material must be:

- Secured immediately
- Passed to the DSL without delay

7.4 Examination of data may only take place:

- With the Principal's authorisation
  - Where there is a clear safeguarding or disciplinary reason
  - Never where child sexual imagery is suspected
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## **8. Communication and Recording**

8.1 Parents and carers will be informed of:

- All searches without consent
- Any prohibited items found  
(Unless doing so would place the child at risk)

8.2 Records must be kept of:

- Searches without consent
- Exceptional circumstances
- Confiscation of prohibited items
- Police involvement

Records will include:

- Date, time and location
- Names of staff and pupils involved
- Grounds for action

- Outcome and follow-up actions
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## **9. Safeguarding**

9.1 All screening, searching and confiscation must take account of:

- Trauma-informed practice
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Medical needs
- Cultural and religious considerations
- Gender identity

9.2 Any safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

9.3 Training:

- Staff authorised to search receive annual training
  - All staff receive safeguarding awareness training
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## **10. Monitoring and Review**

10.1 The Principal and DSL will monitor:

- Frequency and nature of searches
- Items confiscated
- Safeguarding themes and trends

10.2 This policy will be reviewed:

- Every two years, or
- Earlier if statutory guidance changes