

GLC Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Directors on :	Spring 2026
This Policy will be reviewed on :	Spring 2028

GLC Mission Statement

The GLC's mission is to develop active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community.

This will be achieved through:

- High quality teaching that deliberately develops competencies of curiosity, creativity, communication and critical-thinking.
- An inspiring and meaningful curriculum.
- The development of productive relationships by instilling the values of compassion, resilience, responsibility and aspiration to prepare our young people for learning and life.
- A commitment to the wellbeing of our staff.
- A culture of professional generosity, collaboration, challenge and support throughout the GLC.
- The development of effective external partnerships for the benefit and wellbeing of our community.

Equalities Statement

The GLC's commitment to equality is enshrined in our mission statement to develop 'active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community'.

We are a vibrant, innovative and successful organisation: we work hard to be the place of choice to work and to learn. Across the 5 academies of the GLC, we pledge that everyone enjoys an equality of opportunity. We work tirelessly to ensure that individual characteristics including age, ethnicity, socio-economic background, academic ability, disability, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation are not discriminated against in any way. We create inclusive environments characterised by mutual respect where difference is celebrated.

GLC Policy on Searching, Screening and Confiscation

The GLC searching, screening and confiscation policy sets out strategies that support the GLC's Mission Statement and ensures staff and students feel safe and secure in a calm, supportive environment conducive to learning.

All students have a right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy as set out under the European Convention on Human Rights, 1988, Article 8. The right under Article 8 is not absolute; it can be interfered with however it must be justified and proportionate. The power to search in the Education Act 1996 is compatible with Article 8. This means that, when deciding whether to search a student, staff will balance:

- The need to safeguard all students by confiscating harmful, illegal or disruptive items, **and**
- The safeguarding needs, rights and wellbeing of the student suspected of possessing these items, including the potential:
 - loss of privacy when clothes, bags or possessions are searched;
 - loss of a sense of security, if they feel they are being monitored and/or searched without reason;
 - impact on their dignity or reputation if they are searched or suspected of possessing prohibited items.

This policy has been written in line with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, in respect of safeguarding and of students with special education needs and disability.

Supporting policies:

- GLC Teaching for Learning Policy
- GLC Positive Handling Policy
- GLC Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy
- GLC Attendance Policy
- GLC Anti-Bullying Policy
- GLC Complaints Policy
- GLC Curriculum Policy
- GLC Safeguarding Policy
- GLC SEN and Disability Policy
- GLC Drugs Policy

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to:

- Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974
- Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspection Act 2006
- The Schools [Specification and Disposal of Articles] Regulations 2012
- The Schools Behaviour [Determination and Publicising of Measures in Academies] Regulations 2012
- European Convention on Human Rights
- DfE [2022] Searching, Screening and Confiscation
- DfE [2013] Use of reasonable Force
- DfE [2022] Behaviour in Schools
- DfE [2022] Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

All incidents involving searches and confiscations will be treated as a safeguarding issue, with any students identified as vulnerable and at risk of exploitation. The GLC remains alert to potential risks to children who are:

- Showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour;
- In challenging family circumstances, such as drug and alcohol misuse;
- Misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.

In line with our safeguarding procedures, the DSL will be informed of any reasonable suspicion that a student was in possession of a prohibited item and make an immediate referral if there is evidence that a child is at risk of harm.

Searching

Searching can support a calm and safe environment for all staff and students. It is a vital measure to safeguard and promote staff and student welfare, and to maintain high standards of behaviour.

Reasonable grounds

Reasonable grounds for a search include:

- A student is heard talking about an item;
- A staff member is told directly about an item;
- A staff member sees an item;
- A staff member notices a student behaving in a way that causes suspicion that they are concealing an item; or
- Any other situation where a member of staff is of the reasonable opinion that a student is in possession of a banned or prohibited item.

Making the decision to search for prohibited or banned items

- Each GLC Head of School and the CEO are empowered to authorise any member of staff to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the student may have a prohibited item listed below or any other item that the GLC behaviour policies identify as an item which is banned.
- No member of staff can be directed to screen or search young people, but members of staff can be directed to be present when screening or searching is carried out by others. The Head of School may call in external experts [the police] to carry out the searches.
- The person carrying out the search must be the same sex as the young person and the search must be carried out in the presence of another adult, also the same sex as the young person. [There is a limited exception to this rule, see DfE guidance for further details]. The search must be conducted in a private place on school premises or where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the student, for example on a school trip.
- The young person must not be required to remove any clothing other than outer clothing.
- If the young person's possessions are searched this must also be done in the presence of another adult. The person carrying out the search is able to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for exercising that power.
- All members of staff who conduct a search of a student or their possessions must inform the Safeguarding team and a central search record will be held by the Safeguarding Team.

The list of prohibited items is:

- Knives and weapons;
- Alcohol;
- Illegal drugs;
- Stolen items;
- Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used
 - To commit an offence, or

- To cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person [including the student].
- An article specified in regulations:
 - Tobacco and cigarette papers;
 - Fireworks;
 - Pornographic images.

Also, as banned as in accordance with our GLC behaviour policies

- E-cigarettes and vapes;
- Fizzy/Energy drinks;
- Large quantities of sweets/'junk' food;
- Mobile phones [not to be seen, used or heard] and other electronic devices such as air pods.

Students who fail the expectations with regard to mobile phones will be prohibited from taking mobile phones on site. See GLC Secondary Behaviour Policy for more details.

When searching a student

- Staff can search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the student may have a prohibited item listed above or any other item that the GLC behaviour policies identify as an item which is banned or if the student has agreed to be searched.
- Each GLC academy will have authorised members of staff who are permitted to carry out a search of students.
- The authorised member of staff will assess how urgent the need for a search is and should consider the risk to other students and staff.
- Before the search, the member of staff conducting the search will explain to the student why they are being searched, how the search is going to take place and give the student the opportunity to ask any questions.
- When exercising the authority to search, staff will assess and consider the age and any additional needs of the individual. Where required, reasonable adjustments will be put in place for a student with additional needs or a disability.
- Staff will attempt to gain informed consent from the student before a search by explaining: why/how the decision to search has been made; how the search will be conducted; where this will take place; what support there is from trusted adults in school and next steps. They will give the student time to ask any questions.
- The authorised member of staff should always seek the co-operation of the student before conducting a search. If the student is not willing to co-operate with the search, the member of staff should consider why this is. Reasons might include that they:
 - are in possession of a prohibited item;
 - do not understand the instruction;
 - are unaware of what a search may involve; or
 - have had a previous distressing experience of being searched.
- If a student continues to refuse to co-operate, the member of staff may sanction the student in line with the behaviour policy, ensuring that they are responding to misbehaviour consistently and fairly.
- If the member of staff still considers a search to be necessary, but is not required urgently, they should seek the advice of the Head of School, Vice Principal's, designated safeguarding lead [or deputy] or pastoral member of staff who may have more information about the student. During this time the student should be supervised and kept away from other students.

- If the student still refuses to co-operate, the member of staff should assess whether it is appropriate to use reasonable force to conduct the search. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for any prohibited items but not banned items. The decision to use reasonable force should be made on a case-by-case basis. The member of staff should consider whether conducting the search will prevent the students harming themselves or others, damaging property or from causing disorder.
- It should be noted that the use of reasonable force will differ depending on whether the member of staff is searching possessions or the student themselves.

Strip Search

- Strip searches on GLC premises can only be carried out by police officers. While the decision to undertake the strip search itself and its conduct are police matters, Academy staff retain a duty of care to the student(s) involved and should advocate for students' wellbeing at all times.
- Where reasonably possible and if there is no immediate risk of harm, staff should inform a parent of the student suspected of concealing an item in advance of the search. Parents should always be informed by a staff member once a strip search has taken place.
- Except in cases of urgency where there is a risk of serious harm to the student or others, whenever a strip search involves exposure of intimate body parts, there must be at least two people present, other than the students, one of which must be the appropriate adult. See DfE guidance for further details.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbefa55c/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf

After a search

- Following the search of a student or their possessions, each GLC academy will take the appropriate measures that could include the following:
 - Referral to the Safeguarding Team;
 - Sanctions as in accordance to the GLC Behaviour Policies;
 - Referral to external agencies, this could also include the police.

Parents

- Each GLC Academy will inform parents if they have searched their child and/or their possessions and the outcome of the search as soon as it is practicable.

Screening

Screening can help provide reassurance to students, staff and parents at the Academy. Each GLC Academy can impose a requirement that students undergo screening. This can be imposed for the following reasons; however, this list is not exhaustive and if the Head of Schools deems additional screening necessary, it will be put in place.

- Screening of students before they enter an examination to ensure they have no phones or other electronic devices.
- Screening of students for weapons if there is a reason to believe that this would support a calm, safe and supportive environment.
- Screening of students who are prohibited from taking mobile phones on site.

Under normal circumstances the Head of School will inform staff, students and parents if there is going to be the introduction of a screening arrangement and what this will entail.

If a student refuses to be screened, the member of staff should inform a senior member of staff who will consider why the student is not co-operating, and assess whether it is necessary to carry out a search.

Confiscation

Staff must confiscate the following if found in the possession of a young person:

- Any weapons or items which could be used as weapons;
- Illegal drugs; and alcohol or tobacco products.

All staff have the power to confiscate other items of property [for example, mobile phones, jewellery that is not permitted under the uniform policy] which ensures that staff and students feel safe and secure and the environment is calm, supportive and conducive to learning.

Confiscated items

- Knives, controlled drugs, harmful substances and other offensive weapons will be handed to the police to be disposed of.
- Tobacco, cigarette papers, fireworks, and alcohol items will be destroyed under orders from the Head of School.
- Pornography [dependent on the nature and details and including on electronic devices] will be handed to the police or destroyed.
- Stolen items [dependent on the nature and details] will be handed to the police, the owner, retained or disposed of.
- Fizzy drinks/energy drinks will be disposed of.
- Other items will normally be returned to the young person at the end of the day. However, if the student does not display the appropriate behaviour or if it is a repeat offence, a parent will need to collect the item.
- Confiscated items which have not been collected after six months will be disposed of under the direction of the Head of School.

The GLC's general power to discipline enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so.

The law protects members of staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss of, or damage to, any item they have confiscated, provided they acted lawfully.