



Policy on Searching a Pupil

Cheltenham College seeks to cultivate an environment of mutual respect and treat students and staff in a fair and just manner. In the unusual event of a pupil, or a pupil's room, locker or bag, being searched; the school ensures the rights of the pupil are respected and the law of the land upheld. Professional judgement is used in all cases: if in any doubt advice should be sought from a senior member of staff. The following general guidelines should be observed:

- Personal searches should be avoided, as they might violate a pupil's privacy and can lead to allegations of assault.
- If a pupil is suspected of carrying an unauthorised item (for example, alcohol or a laser beam pen) a member of staff should ask the pupil, in the presence of a second adult witness, to turn out their pockets or bag. If the pupil refuses to cooperate, the member of staff should contact the housemaster or housemistress who contacts the pupil's parents and refers the matter to Deputy Head. The parent should be encouraged to persuade the pupil to agree to the search taking place. If the matter is of major concern and the pupil still refuses to approve of the search, then the Police may be called in to conduct the personal search.
- If a boarder's room needs to be searched, it should be with their consent and the search carried out in their presence and in the presence of a second adult witness. If the boarder refuses permission for the room to be searched then the housemaster or housemistress should contact the parent and inform them of the situation that has led to the need for a search to be made. The parent should be encouraged to persuade the pupil to agree to the search taking place. If the matter is of major concern and the pupil still refuses to approve of the search then the Deputy Head should be informed and the Police may be called in to conduct the search of the room. The boarder should conduct the search by emptying out drawers, opening the safe etc. under direction from the members of staff present. Any suspicious items found should be deposited in a plastic bag & sealed.
- If a pupil is suspected of carrying drugs on their person or in their room then the above procedure should be observed: it is possible that the pupil would be suspended from school if they refuse permission for the search to take place.

Whatever the pupil's response, staff should not:

- Touch the pupil forcibly. Any restraint should be in line with the College's policy on the use of restraint
- Search the pupil's person, which for these purposes extends to his or her outer clothing and pockets; or remove the pupil's clothing - even their coat - for the purpose of searching it.
- Search a pupil's pockets: these should be turned out by the pupil.

- Search a pupil's room or bag without them being present and without another adult witness being present.
- Act in isolation: if in any doubt they should refer to a housemaster housemistress or Deputy Head.

If a search reveals any offensive weapons or knives, or evidence in relation to an offence, the item or items should be removed to a place of safe-keeping. The member of staff must inform the Deputy Head. The Deputy Head reports the finding of any weapons to the Police.

If evidence of drugs is found, the Deputy Head determines what action to take in accordance with the College policy on Drugs.

If tobacco or alcohol items are found in pupils' possession, they must be confiscated by the member of staff and taken to the Deputy Head's office where the confiscation and treatment of the items is recorded. The Deputy Head determines what action to take in accordance with the College Policies on Smoking & Alcohol.

Recording the results of searches

When a search has taken place the following items should be noted and kept on the relevant pupils file:

- The reason for the search taking place.
- The date and time of the search.
- The results of the search.
- All staff involved.
- Other agencies involved.
- The general disciplinary outcome (e.g. gating, suspension etc.)

September 2010

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