



All policies carrying the Bryanston logo apply to any other brands or operations of Bryanston including Bryanston Prep

SEARCH AND CONFISCATION POLICY

Author: Senior Deputy Head	Receiver: Pupils, Staff, Parents
Review Date: September 2025	Next Review: September 2026

1. Searching

Any search of a pupil's room and/or possessions will only be undertaken when there is reasonable cause. Wherever possible, the pupil and an adult witness will also be present, and the member of staff will seek the pupil's consent for the search to take place, explaining the reasons for it.

The Department for Education guidance says that members of staff can search a pupil and/or their possessions if the pupil agrees.

In accordance with the DfE Guidance '[Screening, Searching and Confiscation](#)' (Jul 2022), staff, when exercising their powers, must consider the age and needs of pupils being searched or screened. This includes the individual needs or learning difficulties of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and making reasonable adjustments that may be required where a pupil has a disability.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) should be informed of any searching incidents where the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item as listed in paragraph 3. The staff member should also involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) without delay if they believe that a search has revealed a safeguarding risk.

The Head, and staff authorised by the Head, have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions without consent in situations in which they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil may have a prohibited item. A full list of such items can be found in the DfE Guidance '[Screening, Searching and Confiscation](#)' (Jul 2022) but in the School prohibited items include:

- knives or weapons (including imitation guns)
- alcohol
- illegal substances (and also legal substances such as psychoactive substances, including those previously known as 'legal highs' or nitrous oxide)
- tobacco, matches, lighters, other items used for smoking and also vaping
- fireworks (and explosives)
- pornographic material (including images which are stored electronically)
- any article that a member of staff reasonably suspects has been or is likely to



be used to commit an offence or to cause personal injury or damage to property of any person including the pupil.

- stolen items.

The School also has the right to search for any item banned by the School Rules (or contained in the Behaviour Policy or associated documents). In most cases, House Parents will be the people conducting the searches or a member of the SLT. However, it may also be necessary for other staff (including those involved with offsite trips) to conduct searches. * In such circumstances any search will be carried out by a member of staff of the same sex as the pupil being searched. There must be a witness i.e., another staff member present and where possible, that member of staff should also be of the same sex. Pupils may be required to remove outer garments such as hats, gloves, coats, sweatshirts, etc. Staff may search pockets if they have reasonable grounds to suspect they contain prohibited items.

*In exceptional circumstances, where there is reason to believe a pupil/pupils may be at risk of serious harm and no same sex members of staff and/or witness available, this may not apply.

Possessions are deemed to include all school bags, desk, locker, trunks, suitcases, tuckbox, dorm drawers and wardrobes.

2. Recording a Search

Records of searches should be kept, and those conducting searches should notify the House Parents or the Senior Deputy Head (Head, Bryanston Prep in the case of a search of a Bryanston Prep pupil and/or their possessions) as soon as possible, if they are not already aware of the incident. A record of a search **must** also be recorded on MyConcern

3. Confiscation or Seizure of Prohibited/Banned Items

School staff may seize any prohibited or banned item found as a result of a search. School staff may also seize any item, however found, which they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline. The School has appropriate protocols to deal with issues relating to the retention or disposal of prohibited items (e.g. drugs, alcohol, knives, etc).

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device (including mobile phones and laptops), has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Head, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so, unless they are going to give the device to the Police. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

4. Electronic/online devices

The School reserves the right to confiscate an electronic device if it is suspected that the device contains text/images which could have been used in cyberbullying, or contains pornographic material, or it is used in contravention of the School's Guidance on the use



of Mobile Phones. In such circumstances, the electronic device may be searched at school or may be sent away for further investigation/clarification.

In the case of electronic devices that:

- are prohibited (or their use restricted) within the Bryanston policy framework
- are reasonably suspected to have been, or likely to be, used to commit an offence, cause personal injury to any person or cause damage to property
- are used to disrupt teaching
- breach the Behaviour Policy

then (with the exception of child pornographic material), staff can examine any data on the device, and delete data found, where there is good reason to do so. Consent is not required from the pupil or their parents.

Where staff have reasonable grounds to suspect the device contains evidence of an offence, they must hand it over to the police without deleting any data (including child or extreme pornography). **Where there are concerns of child pornography, a report relating to an online element of child-on-child sexual violence or sexual harassment, the key consideration for staff is to not view or forward illegal images of a child.**

Further advice is available on [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#). (UKCIS)

There may be occasions when staff will need to confiscate property on a temporary basis (whether identified by search or by chance). This may include prohibited items, banned items or other items. For example, this might include music equipment which is being played loudly, outer garments of clothing which are against the School rules, etc. Staff need to be aware of issues relating to the chain of custody of such items, which should not be left in an insecure place (or removed from the premises). Such items should be conveyed to the House Parents as soon as possible.

As far as mobile phones are concerned, members of staff may remove a mobile phone during a class if a mobile phone causes a disturbance and then return it to the pupil at the end of the class. House Parents should be informed and, if appropriate, a punishment issued. Confiscation of a mobile phone for a period of longer than a lesson should only take place in exceptional circumstances, or it is used in contravention of the School's Guidance on the use of Mobile Phones (contained within the School's Behaviour Policy)

The School has the right to authorise the use of sniffer dogs to search for illegal substances as part of its Illegal Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy. This may include pupils (in accordance with the Education Act 2011), personal belongings, the boarding houses and the estate.

House Parents (and their nominated assistants, including Matrons, Residents and House Team members) may, acting in loco parentis, need to confiscate/temporarily remove items from pupils in the boarding house, either relating to issues of school discipline or to the smooth running of the boarding house. A record of this will be kept in House.



This document should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Bryanston Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures
- Bryanston Youth Involved Sexual Imagery Policy
- Bryanston School Rules and Regulations
- Bryanston School Behaviour Policy
- Bryanston School Use of Reasonable Force Policy
- Bryanston School Illegal Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy
- Bryanston School Alcohol Policy
- Bryanston School Smoking Policy
- Bryanston School Anti-Bullying Policy

Reference also may be made to:

- Behaviour and discipline in schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff January 2016 (Department for Education)
- Searching, Screening and confiscation: Advice for Schools – July 2022 (Department for Education).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023 (Department for Education)
- The UK Council for Child Internet Safety Advice – “sexting in schools and colleges
– responding to incidents and safeguarding young people”.