

# Behaviour Policy



COOMBE HOUSE  
SCHOOL

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Dorset  
Centre of  
Excellence

## **Contents**

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Values.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. The Importance of Relationships .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.1. Protection .....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.2. Connection .....	5
3.3. Understanding.....	5
3.4. Care .....	5
<b>4. Valued Behaviours - Ready, Respectful and Safe.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. A Personalised Approach.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Positive Behaviour Curriculum.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7. Therapeutic Thinking.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8. Encouraging Valued Behaviours.....</b>	<b>9</b>
8.1. Relational Practice.....	9
8.2. Reward Scheme.....	9
<b>9. Responding to Detrimental Behaviours.....</b>	<b>10</b>
9.1. Understanding Need .....	10
9.2. Supporting Regulation .....	10
9.3. Debriefs and Restorative Practice .....	11
9.4. Learning for Staff.....	11
9.5. Consequences for Detrimental Behaviour .....	11
9.6. Positive Touch / Reasonable Force / Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) .....	13
9.7. Staff Training .....	15
9.8. Exclusion and Suspension .....	15
9.9. Searching, Screening and Confiscation .....	15
9.10. Involvement of the Police .....	15
<b>10. Key Documents / Systems.....</b>	<b>15</b>
10.1. Safety and Support Plan.....	15
10.2. Individual Education Plan (IEP) .....	16
10.3. Therapeutic Thinking Planning Documents / Portal .....	16
10.4. Arbor .....	16
<b>11. Monitoring / Governance .....</b>	<b>16</b>

11.1. Daily and Weekly Monitoring .....	16
11.2. Monitoring Over Time.....	17
11.3. Governance Overview.....	17
11.4. Relevant Escalation .....	17
<b>12. Version Control .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – Screening and Searching of Pupils .....</b>	<b>18</b>

## **1. Introduction**

Coombe House School (the School) is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all pupils feel valued, supported, and understood. The School recognise that appropriate and positive behaviour is not innate, but a skill that needs to be taught, learned, and reinforced over time.

The Behaviour Policy is linked to the Curriculum Policy, reflecting the belief that learning extends beyond academic achievement to include personal development and social responsibility.

By explicitly teaching and consistently promoting positive behaviour, the aim is to create a school environment where every pupil can thrive, reach their full potential, and make meaningful, respectful contributions to the world around them preparing for life beyond Coombe House.

## **2. Values**

This policy is underpinned by the core values of Coombe House School:

- A Culture of Kindness – Ensuring that pupils are supported with the highest regard and positivity distinguishing between the person and the presentation.
- A Sense of Belonging – Providing a space for pupils to be themselves, feel a sense of community and feel secure in making mistakes and learning from them.
- A Belief in Ambition – Providing pupils with the opportunities to succeed in all aspects of their life and become positive contributors to their own communities and of those around them. There is no ceiling for achievement for pupils at Coombe House School.

## **3. The Importance of Relationships**

In order to be successful at school, pupils need to develop positive relationships which enable them to feel safe, secure and to access learning opportunities. In order for this to happen, relationships and kindness are at the heart of school life.

For many pupils the development of these trusting relationships will need to be explicit, meaningful and very clearly perceived and so these personalised approaches are detailed in their individual plans. Pupils who have additional barriers to building positive relationships may need additional time and support to achieve this.

Through these secure relationships, pupils allow adults to support them in understanding their feelings and emotions. Over time, they develop their understanding of social situations and develop healthy and positive feelings about themselves and develop emotional intelligence.

The approach to developing relationships at Coombe House School is based on providing:

- Protection
- Connection
- Understanding
- Care

### **3.1. Protection**

For pupils to explore, play, and learn effectively, they need to feel safe and secure. Without this, they may become hyper-vigilant and struggle to regulate their emotions. Safety comes primarily from secure, consistent relationships with trusted adults. Staff can foster this by being predictable, reliable, and supportive, providing structure, routines, and clear boundaries. Non-verbal cues like warm expressions and non-threatening body language are also essential.

### **3.2. Connection**

Humans are inherently social, and a meaningful connection supports both mental health and academic success. This involves fostering a sense of belonging to the school environment, curriculum, peers, and adults. It requires genuine, emotionally significant connections that resonate with each pupil's unique needs.

### **3.3. Understanding**

Pupils with disrupted emotional development may struggle to process and regulate their emotions. Challenges with language, literacy, or executive functioning can further complicate relationships and learning. Sensory needs also play a critical role, with some pupils being hyper- or hypo- sensitive. The approach includes ongoing assessment and personalised support to address these diverse needs.

### **3.4. Care**

Positive and consistent care helps pupils to develop self-worth, emotional stability, and resilience. Each pupil's individual education plan reflects their specific needs, ensuring a consistent yet personalised approach to support their growth and well-being.

## **4. Valued Behaviours - Ready, Respectful and Safe**

Positive behaviour cultures are developed by having a small amount of consistently applied expectations, which the Therapeutic Thinking approach calls 'Valued Behaviours'.

At Coombe House School, the valued behaviours are:

- Pupils should be Ready – Ready to learn, ready to listen, ready to engage.
- Pupils should be Respectful – Respectful to themselves, respectful to others, respectful to the environment.
- Pupils should be Safe – Keep themselves safe, keep others safe.

## **5. A Personalised Approach**

There is no universal script or single approach that works for all pupils. The way relationships are developed – and preferences, interests, and successful strategies are identified – is critical to ensuring the responses are the right ones for the individual being supported.

This means that two pupils who present with the same behaviour may require it to be addressed in different ways. One may require for it to be clearly and immediately challenged ‘in the moment’ whereas another may require it to be addressed later, quietly and away from others. ‘Zero tolerance’ and ‘one size fits all’ approaches are not believed to be effective.

As more is known about the elements that make the support of each individual safe and successful, it is recorded using the Safety and Support Plan. This creates a ‘toolkit’ of strategies to be developed and shared to ensure successful proactive practices that supports regulation, and safety during moments of distress or dysregulation.

## **6. Positive Behaviour Curriculum**

Coombe House School believes that an effective approach to promoting and teaching positive behaviour is through a carefully curated curriculum that addresses the building blocks of valued behaviours; “we teach, not tell”.

Learning to be ‘Ready, Respectful and Safe’ is achieved through the curriculum. Developing the knowledge, skills and experience to successfully and consistently present with valued behaviours is complex and combines learning across many different areas.



The Curriculum Wheel (above) puts personal and social development that support valued behaviours, and application of these new skills in the community at the heart of its overall holistic intention. They are not 'separate' or 'bolted on' to academic and vocational learning but instead are integrated into the whole school approach.

## 7. Therapeutic Thinking

Alongside the fundamental belief that the curriculum is the primary route through which a positive behaviour culture is created, the management of behaviour requires specific structures and processes to ensure that approaches and interventions are well planned and carefully monitored.

Coombe House School follows the Therapeutic Thinking approach, which is one modelled on best practice and research and is repeatedly shown to support the development of positive cultures.

Central to the Therapeutic Thinking approach is the concept of a graduated response, as shown below.





## **8. Encouraging Valued Behaviours**

### **8.1. Relational Practice**

The relational practice is an important way that valued behaviours are encouraged and promoted. Through noticing, praising and reinforcing positive choices, feedback is provided that allows pupils to build their behavioural skills over time.

Certificates, phone calls home, praise from staff (or other senior / favoured staff) and suitable rewards are used based on individual needs and context to recognise success.

### **8.2. Reward Scheme**

To support the learning, rehearsal and encouragement of valued behaviours, the School uses a positive reward system based on the core themes of Ready, Respectful and Safe.

For each timetabled session, pupils are able to achieve 3 points, 1 for each of the Valued Behaviours (Ready, Respectful, Safe).

In addition to the core points achievable in each lesson, where pupils demonstrate learning, engagement and behaviours 'above and beyond' by demonstrating kindness, ambition or belonging, 1 additional 'bonus point' can be earned.

Points received are converted on a weekly basis to a monetary value:

- 1 point – 2p
- 1 bonus point – 10p

Pupils are able to spend their reward money on items of their choosing, under certain conditions:

- Sufficient reward money to purchase the item – pupils cannot purchase into 'debt'.
- The class teacher deems the purchase to be appropriate.
- All purchase requests are approved by parents / carers.
- Vouchers will not be purchased as standard and only done so in exceptional circumstances and agreed by the Headteacher.
- Any purchases of food items are to be taken home and not consumed on site and must be approved by the Headteacher.
- All money is to be spent by the end of the academic year.

The positive reward scheme aims to support the pupils in making positive and appropriate choices in relation to their learning, engagement and behaviour. It also promotes key life skills involved with money, earning, budgeting and saving, further supporting the life skills and preparation for adulthood curriculum.

Points are tracked and recorded via an individual pupil tracker that can support analysis of progress and patterns surrounding pupil's behaviour presentation.

## **9. Responding to Detrimental Behaviours**

### **9.1. Understanding Need**

Some pupils may present behaviour that does not represent the valued behaviours of Ready, Respectful and Safe.

It is important to remember that in these instances this may be as a result of life experiences that have developed values and beliefs that are different to those expected at the School, or that pupils have entered a state of fight, flight or freeze based on the context of the situation they are faced with.

Therapeutic Thinking refer to these responses as dysregulation (subconscious / less-conscious behaviour) or values and beliefs (more conscious behaviour).

- Dysregulation – Behaviour without thought or planning triggered by overwhelming feelings. A pupil is unable to moderate or self-regulate.
- Values and Beliefs – Behaviour presents as a result of some thought and planning, in order to secure a desired outcome. Pupils may be unwilling to moderate or self-regulate but it is understood that the values and beliefs that lie behind this choice are created through their experiences to date and are often significantly impacted by external factors beyond their control.

When describing detrimental behaviour, staff are asked to be objective, specific and to seek to avoid generalisation, dramatization or inclusion of their own emotional responses, which can make it harder to analyse ‘what happened’.

### **9.2. Supporting Regulation**

It is normal for pupils of all ages to be playful, challenge authority and to test boundaries. Most pupils will at some point overstep a boundary and will need reminding about agreements and expectations. Individual relationships, and the relational skills utilised should be the first port of call at these times.

It is important to be mindful of the additional barriers that many pupils have and the impact this has on their stress regulation system. They may have a narrower window of tolerance than is typical and so the frequency with which they enter a state of fight / flight / freeze may be higher.

It is at these points that pupils will need repeated experiences of safe adults alongside them, supporting them to feel secure in order to reinforce the development of their own regulation systems and expand their window of tolerance over time.

Sometimes, when a pupil is experiencing strong emotions, the resulting behaviours may not be safe. In these circumstances, making the situation safe should be the primary objective.

When responding to the needs of a pupil whilst they are experiencing strong emotions, it is important for staff to remain steady within their self; to be aware of their own hooks and triggers, which may bring about emotional responses that might impact upon the effectiveness of support. Focussing on the needs of the pupil is most effective in the moment.

### **9.3. Debriefs and Restorative Practice**

Following incidents of dangerous detrimental behaviours (and where required, difficult detrimental behaviour), the school completes a debrief with those involved and where possible / appropriate, to ensure that restorative work is completed for all involved.

When completing debriefs and restorative work, the School considers the following:

- An appropriate time to complete. This should be completed when the pupil is ready.
- If a pupil resists the process, this is a prompt for staff to develop other strategies to bring engagement, not to avoid it.
- Debriefs are critical to inform future practice and reduce risk.
- Restorative work is developmental and not punitive.

Pupils are not 'made' to apologise for their behaviour; an apology should be genuine and initiated by the pupil to be worthwhile.

### **9.4. Learning for Staff**

It is critical that restorative practice is not solely about reflection on the part of the pupil. There will almost always be learning on the part of the School and of individual staff. Staff should model humility and where appropriate, share what they feel they might do differently next time as part of the process.

It is acknowledged that staff may also need support as part of their own part of the restorative practice processes. The School takes this responsibility seriously and has structures and processes that offer the support that they need.

### **9.5. Consequences for Detrimental Behaviour**

Following incidents of detrimental behaviour, the School understands there may need to be consequences issued as part of its response. Consequences should not be punitive sanctions or punishments as this creates feelings of shame and are not helpful in promoting meaningful learning or developing skills.

Therapeutic Thinking has two forms of consequences:

- Protective Consequences - Necessary measures to manage risk of harm. These may limit freedoms if it is necessary to make a situation safe.
- Educational Consequences - Progress a pupils understanding and engagement following an event.

There are a number of possible consequences that staff are able to deploy, for which some examples have been listed below. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, no other consequences should be used without approval from the Headteacher:

- Being offered additional opportunities to rehearse and practise valued behaviour skills, conversation and exploration
- Temporary alterations to staff ratio, leadership involvement or other changes to staffing, including additional training where necessary
- Understanding that when something is broken, it is no longer available for use. Where damage or disruption to the school environment has been caused by a pupil, then work to understand the impact of this, and assisting with putting this right may be a useful consequence that could aid learning.
- Limitations re. access to some or all areas / resources of the School, for example:
  - If an incident of concern occurred on the playing fields, access to the playing fields may be temporarily withdrawn.
  - If a pupil is misusing school equipment (e.g. craft scissors, kitchen knives, IT equipment) and the result is that there is risk or harm or of disruption to learning, access to these may be removed (whilst understanding the importance of always prioritising learning how to use equipment safely in the longer term).
  - If a pupil's presentation was judged to be unsafe, the school may make adjustments to ensure that they can be more safe, e.g. if a pupil is not safe whilst in school transport, staff can set a period of time where they do not travel in school transport and instead focus on developing their safety skills.
  - Outreach from staff to offer intervention and support in the community to reduce the triggers that may be present within the school environment.
  - Partnerships with specialist external providers (suitably safeguarded) to offer approaches and support that the School cannot offer in-house
- If a behaviour causes concern, staff may choose to call parents / carers to inform them of the behaviour. This is not to punish or humiliate the pupil but to facilitate effective communication and a consistent approach to support the pupil to develop their skills.

When considering the use of individualised, creative, planned packages of support that may include time with off-site partners to prevent suspension or exclusion, decisions need to be made with consideration of the views of the pupil, family and partner agencies. In these cases, it should be made clear what the purpose of these alternative packages are:

- What needs are being met that cannot be met in school?
- What outcomes are being worked towards and how is the provision meeting these needs?
- How will the pupil remain connected to the school?
- How will they reintegrate into school?

#### **9.6. Positive Touch / Reasonable Force / Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)**

There are times where pupils seek and / or require supportive and consensual physical contact to support them in their regulation. In these instances, these strategies are to be initiated by the pupils and are never initiated by staff without there being communicated wishes of a pupil. When they become part of the normal routines for an individual, they are recorded on their Safety and Support Plan.

Examples of positive touch include but are not limited to:

- Side hugs
- Hand holding
- Linking arms

The School recognises and understands that there may be occasions where dangerous detrimental behaviour may require the use of reasonable force as a last resort. The school adheres to the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on the [Use of Reasonable Force](#) (July 2013) and only uses this to:

- Prevent pupils from harming themselves or others.
- Prevent damage to property.
- Prevent pupils from causing disorder.

Reasonable force is broadly categorised as:

- Non-Physical Restrictive Practice (NPRP) – A practice of restricting the liberty and freedom of a pupil(s) using methods that do not involve physical human touch. For example, a member of staff may choose to keep a pupil(s) in a classroom when they are actively attempting to leave by means of locking or blocking a classroom door (which is contrary to the usual practice of having unlocked classroom doors). Staff should not typically keep a pupil(s) in a locked room without an adult present; when this form of reasonable force is applied, the adult should typically make all reasonable efforts to be in the room with the pupil(s) to avoid any feelings of incarceration / imprisonment and the trauma that can come from this.
- Non-Restrictive Physical Intervention (NRPI) – A practice of using reasonable, proportionate and necessary physical touch to support a pupil without their express permission to increase safety but without restricting their liberty and freedom. For

example, staff members using physical touch to prevent a punch / kick to one part of the body by blocking it with another part of their body, or to use a supportive guide to steer a pupil away from a risky situation (but in a way that they are not being restrained, and can move away from the physical touch at any point if they wish to).

- Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) – A practice of using restrictive holds (restraint) to support a pupil that restricts their liberty and freedom. For example, physically preventing a pupil from running towards a road when they have known gaps in their road safety awareness, or towards another pupil when it is believed they intend to cause them significant physical harm. RPI is used when NRPI is judged insufficient to reasonably and effectively manage a situation.

The School is committed to a culture focused on reducing the need for all forms of reasonable force as far as is possible:

- Reasonable force must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and must never be used as a punishment. It should only be used if there is an immediate and significant danger to pupils, staff or school property. It should be carried out in the best interests of the pupil(s).
- Reasonable force must only be used if all other strategies have failed. It must neither be threatened nor employed in a punitive manner, nor to force compliance with staff instructions and should never use more force / restriction or last longer than the minimum that is reasonably required.
- Reasonable force may be used where a pupil is on school premises or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of a staff member and must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary to the circumstances.
- Reasonable force is recorded and monitored closely. The Managing Director is notified of every incident that involves use of reasonable force and will become involved in its review as necessary.

Where the use of RPI exceeds the following thresholds for an individual pupil, they are escalated to the Nominated Safeguarding Director within 24 hours of the incident occurring for additional review:

- A single continuous RPI that lasts more than three minutes.
- An incident(s) on a single day that:
  - Involves six or more individual RPIs.
  - Cumulatively lasts more than six minutes

Where an individual pupil has three or more RPIs at the threshold detailed above within a single half term period, they shall be considered to be at 'Targeted Plus' within the Therapeutic Thinking Graduated Response, meaning they will receive the attention and intervention required to ensure their needs are being fully met, and that the School is doing all it reasonably can to minimise the potential for future RPIs in the short and longer term.

For the avoidance of doubt, this is not the only way that a pupil might be considered as requiring 'Targeted Plus'. Staff may also put this level of support in place based on their broader holistic assessment of a pupil's internalising and externalising behaviours, or as a result of noticed changes to their behavioural presentation.

### **9.7. Staff Training**

In line with the [Department of Education Guidance "Use of Reasonable Force"](#), all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force, when used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, or from damaging property. To assist them in doing this safely and effectively, all school staff are required to complete the relevant training for the use of RPI. Until September 2025, the School shall use Crisis Prevention Institute 'Safety Intervention' training but will then transition to the Therapeutic Thinking equivalent training to ensure consistency regarding its positive approach to behaviour.

### **9.8. Exclusion and Suspension**

An exclusion or suspension is only to be used as a last resort and should be a proportionate response where there is no alternative. In the rare circumstances where an exclusion or suspension is considered, the purpose of the exclusion or suspension and the impact that it will have on the pupil will always be carefully considered.

More information is outlined in detail within the [Exclusion and Suspension Policy](#).

### **9.9. Searching, Screening and Confiscation**

The School follows the DfE Guidance in relation to [Searching, Screening and confiscation](#) (2022) and an approach aligned with '[Keeping Children safe in Education](#)' (2024).

Specific procedures are outlined within Appendix 2.

### **9.10. Involvement of the Police**

The National Police Chief's Council has produced [guidance](#) which will be referred to when considering whether to contact the police. When viewed through the context of the significant barriers that many of the pupils already have to achieving a happy, safe and fulfilled adulthood, staff should be mindful of the additional barrier that criminalisation and involvement with the criminal justice system can become.

## **10. Key Documents / Systems**

### **10.1. Safety and Support Plan**

This is the centrally held document where staff log positive strategies that aid regulation for the pupil to support a consistent approach. Known difficult and / or dangerous detrimental behaviours are recorded alongside suggested effective strategies and responses. Any information relevant to the use of reasonable force and / or RPI (e.g. known positive techniques that have worked previously) is detailed to maximise safety. These are reviewed

following significant behaviour incidents and, on a half-termly basis. This document is also the pupil's risk assessment, which is integrated to avoid any confusion / contradiction regarding favoured approaches. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in the writing and review of their Safety and Support Plans.

#### **10.2.      Individual Education Plan (IEP)**

This is where the pupil's educational targets are recorded centrally to aid a consistent approach. Key focus areas of the pupil's behaviour curriculum are outlined here, alongside the pupil's desired outcomes from their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These are reviewed half termly and shared with parents / carers. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in the creation and review of their IEP.

#### **10.3.      Therapeutic Thinking Planning Documents / Portal**

The Therapeutic Thinking approach includes use of a range of research-informed integrated planning documents that supports proactive, solution-focussed interventions that form its graduated response. These documents are in the process of being collated into an intuitive portal, which the School shall adopt over time. The documents that are used by the School include:

- Risk Calculator.
- Anxiety Analysis.
- Predict, Prevent and Progress Plan.
- Therapeutic Plan.

#### **10.4.      Arbor**

The Management Information System (MIS) where staff log positive progress against their IEP and behaviour curriculum targets. It is also where incidents of difficult and / or dangerous detrimental behaviours are recorded. Incidents are reviewed by the Behaviour Lead. Incidents that involve dangerous detrimental behaviours require an additional form to ensure sufficient detail is collected. This allows for the appropriate level of analysis, support and follow-up action to take place.

As key documents are updated, key changes are communicated to ensure consistent adoption of any new / amended strategies.

### **11. Monitoring / Governance**

#### **11.1.      Daily and Weekly Monitoring**

Where there is a need to oversee an incident immediately, or on the same day, there is leadership capacity to support this.



The School also reviews incidents more strategically on a weekly basis to ensure that patterns are identified, safeguarding considerations are discussed, updates to documents are made and changes to provision are committed to.

#### **11.2. Monitoring Over Time**

As well as the learning and reflection that occurs after each individual incident, they are also analysed over time, so that patterns can be explored and further adjustments for support and provision can be arranged.

#### **11.3. Governance Overview**

Incident review features in the School's quality assurance and governance procedures.

Data is shared with the Managing Director and the Board of Directors, who offer effective support and challenge to the School as part of their duties.

#### **11.4. Relevant Escalation**

The Headteacher, as part of their monitoring of incidents shall promptly escalate details of incidents that are of concern to the Managing Director. The Managing Director shall further escalate details to the Board (typically to the Nominated Safeguarding Lead) as required.

Incidents that are escalated are typically characterised as:

- Requiring any interaction with emergency services and / or urgent medical treatment beyond first aid.
- Requiring use of suspension or exclusion for a pupil and/or a significant period of related absence for a staff member / other adult.
- Requiring use of RPI to the threshold defined above.
- Involving concern about misconduct or an allegation of misconduct regarding a staff member / other adult.
- Impacting upon the smooth running of the School, e.g. an incident that requires part or all of the School to close or significant adapt its operations.

Any incident considered to be a potential safeguarding concern shall be reported in line with the [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#).

### **12. Version Control**

Date of adoption of this policy	June 2025
Date of last review of this policy	
Date for next review of this policy	June 2026
Policy owner (Proprietor)	Dorset Centre of Excellence

## **Appendix 1 – Screening and Searching of Pupils**

Although rarely required, the School has provision for responding to risks that may require the screening and searching of pupils. Where screening and searching is required, it will be done so by carefully considering the dignity, privacy, individual needs and disabilities of any pupil prior and throughout any such activity.

Where practicable, staff who have the strongest relationships with a pupil shall support with the decision making and the support of a pupil that is subject to any screening or searching.

The School approach is in line with [\*'Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools'\*](#) [DfE \(July 2022\)](#) and considers *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'* (DfE 2024).

The School has assessed that it does not have a need to screen pupils routinely upon arrival and / or departure from school.

In the event of an identified need to search or confiscate, the Headteacher shall be informed, who will act, or ask others to act in accordance with *'Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools'*.

The School is mindful of publicised cases, such as that of 'Child Q', and is keen to ensure that the dignity and reasonable privacy of a pupil is balanced with any risks or safeguarding concerns that are presented, particularly if the police attend site and support with a search.

If reasonably practicable, the Headteacher shall discuss the matter with the Managing Director, or another appropriately experienced colleague, before commencing with a search.

As outlined within the *'Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools'* the list of items identified as prohibited is supported by the School:

- Knives and weapons.
- Alcohol.
- Illegal drugs.
- Stolen items.
- Any article that a member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used:
  - To commit an offence.
  - To cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the pupil).
- An article specified in regulations:
  - Tobacco and cigarette papers.
  - Fireworks.
  - Pornographic images.

Staff are not permitted to search for items banned under the School rules.