

# True North Alternative Provision

## Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

True North Alternative Provision is committed to providing a safe, supportive and therapeutic learning environment where all Students, staff and visitors feel protected and respected. This policy sets out the lawful, proportionate and transparent approach to searching, screening and confiscation, in line with statutory guidance and Ofsted expectations.

We recognise that many Students attending alternative provision may have experienced trauma, exclusion or disrupted education. All actions under this policy will therefore be underpinned by our therapeutic ethos, safeguarding responsibilities and commitment to dignity, fairness and Students' rights.

### 2. Legal Framework and Statutory Guidance

This policy is informed by and complies with:

- Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Provisions (DfE) 2022
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework 2025

### 3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All Students on roll or accessing provision at True North Alternative Provision
- All staff, including supply staff and volunteers
- All settings where True North operates, including outreach, off-site activities and transport where appropriate

### 4. Principles

All searching, screening and confiscation will be:

- Lawful and reasonable
- Proportionate to the risk

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- Undertaken to safeguard Students and others
- Sensitive to Students' age, needs, SEND, mental health and trauma history
- Recorded and reported appropriately

Force will **only ever be used as a last resort** and in line with our Behaviour, Positive Handling and Safeguarding policies.

### 5. Prohibited and Banned Items

The following items are prohibited and may be searched for and confiscated:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs and substances
- Stolen items
- Fireworks
- Pornographic or inappropriate images
- Vapes
- Lighters
- Offensive materials
- Any item likely to be used to cause harm, threaten safety or disrupt learning

The provision may also ban additional items where this is clearly communicated to Students and parents/carers.

### 6. Screening

Screening may include the use of non-intrusive methods such as:

- Visual checks
- Bag or locker checks
- Requesting Students to empty pockets or bags voluntarily

Screening will always be:

- Explained clearly to the pupil
- Conducted respectfully
- Recorded where concerns arise

### 7. Searching Students

#### 7.1 Searches With Consent

Staff may search a pupil with their consent for any item. Consent will be:

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- Clearly requested and explained
- May be withdrawn at any time by the pupil

Where consent is refused and there is no immediate risk, alternative safeguarding actions will be considered.

### 7.2 Searches Without Consent

The Head of Provision and authorised staff may search a pupil **without consent** if there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil has a prohibited item.

Such searches will:

- Be conducted by a trained member of staff
- Take place with another staff member present where possible
- Never involve removal of clothing beyond outerwear (coats, shoes, hats, gloves)

**Intimate searches are never carried out by True North staff.** If an intimate search is required, police involvement will be sought.

### 8. Use of Reasonable Force

Reasonable force may be used only when:

- There is an immediate risk of harm
- A pupil is committing a criminal offence
- Safety cannot be maintained by other means

Any use of force will:

- Be proportionate and necessary
- Be recorded and reported to senior leadership
- Trigger a review and debrief with the pupil, staff and parents.

### 9. Confiscation of Items

Confiscated items will be managed as follows:

- Illegal items will be passed to the police
- Controlled items may be stored securely and returned to parents/carers
- Harmful items may be disposed of safely

Students will be informed of:

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- Why an item has been confiscated
- How and when it may be returned

### 10. Safeguarding and Vulnerable Students

All searches and confiscations are safeguarding matters. Care will be taken where Students:

- Have SEND
- Have experienced trauma
- Have mental health needs

Any safeguarding concerns identified during a search will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

### 11. Recording and Reporting

The following will be recorded:

- Reason for the search or confiscation
- Items found
- Staff involved
- Use of force (if applicable)
- Follow-up actions

Records will be stored securely and reviewed by senior leadership.

### 12. Staff Training

All staff will receive training on:

- Legal powers and limitations
- Trauma-informed practice
- De-escalation strategies
- Recording and reporting procedures

Only authorised and trained staff may conduct searches.

### 13. Equality and Human Rights

True North Alternative Provision will ensure this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination. Adjustments will be made to support Students with protected characteristics or additional needs.

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## 14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated in line with statutory guidance
- Monitored through safeguarding audits and leadership oversight

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**Approved by:** Director / Head of True North Alternative Provision

**Date:** 14.02.2026

**Next Review:** 14.02.2027

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