

Briefcase 4

Teachers have the right to confiscate items. However, it is important to have a clear confiscation policy that outlines how and where items might be stored and when they should be returned

Confiscation policy

At _____ school we have clear rules about the items that are inappropriate for pupils to bring into the school.

These items include:

- An item that poses a threat e.g. a laser pen, matches
- Items which are illegal for a child to have
- Items which might cause tension within the community
- Mobile phones and other electronic gadgets unless these have been agreed with the year leader
- Chewing gum
- Any item that might be used as a weapon e.g. swiss army knife
- Items of clothing which are not school uniform e.g. jewellery

There are also items which might be allowed in school but which have a limited use. For example, personal music players are allowed in the sixth form common room but cannot be used during lessons. We expect pupils to follow these rules. The sanction for bringing one of the items into school is its confiscation.

Confiscation must be a reasonable sanction in the circumstances of the case. It must be applied in a reasonable and proportionate way and be necessary in order to maintain an environment conducive to learning and safeguarding the rights of other pupils to be educated.

Retention and disposal of confiscated property

There are times when it is appropriate to dispose of confiscated items. For example:

- Chewing gum
- Cigarettes
- Small items of stationery

At other times to dispose of the item would not be proportionate. Confiscation must be proportionate – that means it relies on the value as well of the object.

Staff should be careful when confiscating items of clothing and jewellery as to whether they have any religious significance.

If any physical contact is necessary as part of the removal of the item it is important that this is carried out by a member of staff of

the same sex as the pupil and that another member of staff is present where possible.

A record of all confiscated items is kept in the bursar's office. A note should be made of:

- The item taken
- The person it is confiscated from
- Reason for confiscation
- Date taken
- Date returned

All confiscated items should be returned by the end of the week in which they are confiscated. In some cases it will be appropriate to return the confiscated item at the end of the school day. For example, in the case of a mobile phone which may be needed out of school. In some cases it may be appropriate to contact parents and ask them to collect the item e.g. a swiss army knife.

Where a member of staff is unsure the deputy headteacher or headteacher should be asked.

Confiscated items of value should be stored in the bursar's store cupboard. These items should be labeled with the pupil's name, when it was confiscated and by whom. Smaller items e.g. items of stationery and books might be kept in the teacher's desk in the classroom.

In the case of the confiscation of a valuable item e.g. item of jewellery, parents should be informed through the home-school link book.

Where there is uncertainty about the confiscated item e.g. it is suspected that it is an illegal drug, the headteacher should be notified immediately

Mobile phones

Mobiles are prohibited in school unless permission has been sought and agreed prior to them being brought in. Permission is only given where it is felt that the phone is necessary to ensure the safety of the pupil to and from school.

Staff must be particularly alert to the possible use of mobiles for bullying activities. Where a phone is confiscated for this reason the member of staff should refer the concern to the phase leader who will investigate its use. A pupil can be asked to reveal a message on the phone but members of staff cannot search the phone without permission from the pupil. If a pupil refuses then a sanction can be administered for failure to follow instructions.