Within this policy, Doucecroft School Services relates to the school day and residential services.
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1. Ethos

We welcome individuality and provide a safe and positive learning environment, to enable our students to thrive and meet their full potential preparing them for their future.

2. Our Mission

At Doucecroft School Services our mission is that our students are/have:

- Developing – Independence and life skills
- Opportunity – to experience and learn new things
- Understanding – to be understood and valued as an individual
- Creativity – to express myself as an individual
- Encouraged – to try new things and realise my potential
- Confidence – to achieve and develop my self-esteem
- Respect – to feel accepted and accept others
- Openness – to share experience and feelings with others
- Fairness – to be recognised for achievement
- Tolerance – accept that everybody is different

3. Purpose of the Policy

Doucecroft School Services recognises the difficulties that students may have in making appropriate and safe choices. Evaluating risks/concerns may sometimes necessitate a search of a student’s possessions or room.

4. Risks/Concerns

Prohibited items at Doucecroft Services include:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers (the school is a no smoking site)
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that a member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or injure a person or damage property e.g. sharp implements, aerosols, jewellery, matches, cigarette lighters
- any item that is used to cause bullying, printed or in electronic format

Where appropriate, strategies will be implemented to support residential students who are 18 years old and over, with respect to smoking and accessing age appropriate content. It will be based on individual needs and agreed by the Care Manager/Deputy Care Manager.
5. Other Policies to be read in conjunction with this policy:
   - Safeguarding and Child Protection
   - Positive Behaviour Policy
   - Risk Assessment

6. Existing controls
   - Students and family are all issued with clear guidelines about what they need to bring in, or what is appropriate, for personal, educational and recreational use Individual Management Programmes
   - Getting to Know Me Care Plans
   - Home school agreement
   - Risk Assessments
   - Key policies and procedures e.g. Safeguarding, Positive Behaviour Policy

7. Grounds for a Search
   Members of staff must decide in each case what constitutes reasonable grounds for suspicion, e.g. they may have heard other students talking about the item or notice a student behaving in a suspicious manner.

   The school can rely on CCTV footage to help reach their decision. These powers apply regardless of whether any prohibited item is found on the pupil.

   Staff, parents, carers or other significant persons concerned with the welfare of a student may at times have cause to suspect or indeed know, that the student has in their possession harmful objects, substances or other’s personal possessions, which they may misuse. In such cases it may be necessary to carry out a search of the student’s possessions or the suspected location of the cause for concern, e.g., bedroom, bathroom, etc. Consideration should be given as to whether failure to carry out a search will place the student and or others at risk.

   If a concern is raised that there is potential risk of harm or significant harm through the student having covert access to inappropriate items or materials, then a checklist should be completed by senior staff (Teacher, TA, Team Leader)

8. Authorisation to Search

   The Head Teacher/Care Manager and other members of the Senior Team are authorised to conduct searches.

Searching with consent

   • Authorised staff may search with a student’s consent for any item. The Head Teacher/Care Manager may authorise other staff to undertake this task, provided they are appropriately trained to do so (see guidance below for when searching a student).
Searching without consent

The procedure, which should be adhered to at such times, is as follows:

- Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is involved in a situation where a search can help clarify the situation, staff are to complete the ‘Cause for Concern’ risk assessment.
- Share this with your line manager and a member of the SMT.
- The search must be authorised by the Head Teacher/Care Manager or by a member of the senior management team. At least one member of the SMT will be involved in the search.
- If the cause for concern is deemed to be such that the welfare of the student or others is at risk, then a search of the student’s possessions or a location may be authorised immediately by a member of the senior management team/senior member of staff.
- If possible the student should be included in this process. However if, due to the individual student’s understanding of the situation and the nature of their Autistic Spectrum Condition, it is felt that inclusion in this process may cause undue anxiety or agitation and compromise confidentiality and the safety of others, a decision regarding including the individual in this process will be made by the member of the senior management team.
- Findings should be accurately dated, timed and reported in writing on the reverse side of the risk assessment carried out prior to the search. All involved in the search should sign the report, (this may include the student) and the form should be passed on to the authorising members of the senior management team.
- Any outcomes of the search may be used to inform future strategies, decisions and key policies.
- Information regarding any outcomes of a search may well be shared with parents/carers and agencies such as Social Services, if appropriate.

9. Requirements for carrying out a search

Any search of boarders’ personal belongings should be carried out in accordance with section 550ZA of the Education Act 1996 and with regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Searching a Student

Students can only be required to remove ‘outer clothing’. ‘Outer clothing’ means clothing that is not worn next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear. Outer clothing includes hats, shoes, boots, gloves and scarves. Staff can carry out a personal search involving the removal of outer clothing and searching of pockets. Staff must be the same sex as the student being searched; and there must be a second member of staff present and. All physical searches of students will take into account sexual orientation where know or transgender issues.
Staff cannot carry out an intimate search; this can only be carried out by the police.

Searching a student’s possessions

A student’s possessions can only be searched with the student and another member of staff present unless there is a risk of serious harm to a person if the search is not carried out immediately and it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff. ‘Possessions’ mean any goods over which the student has or appears to have control including workstations, bags, bedrooms, cupboards.

Use of force

Members of staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances when conducting a search for any prohibited item as listed on page 3 (4. Risks and concerns), however force cannot be used to search for items solely banned under school rules.

10. After the Search

- Any prohibited item that has been or could be used to commit an offence, harm someone or damage property may be given to the police.
- Any item which is banned under school rules can be dealt with as the member of staff in their professional judgment thinks fit.
- A member of the SMT to notify parents and in the case of LAC students; social worker to be informed.

11. Guidance on Electronic Devices

- If a member of staff thinks there is a good reason to examine an electronic device. Complete the ‘Cause for Concern’ risk assessment and share this with your line manager and pass on to a member of the SMT.

- The Education Act 2012 allows authorised persons to examine data on electronic devices if they think there is a good reason to do so. This will be carried out by the Head Teacher/Care Manager or a member of the SMT team in determining a “good reason” to examine or erase the data or files the authorised staff member must reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm, to disrupt teaching or could break the school rules. Following an examination, if the person has decided to return the device to the student, or to retain or dispose of it, they may erase any data or files, if they think there is a good reason to do so.

- SMT may lawfully search electronic devices where they reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm e.g. cyberbullying, to disrupt teaching or break the school rules,
commit an offence, cause personal injury, or damage property. If the student refuses to hand over the device, SMT to contact parents and if necessary the police.

- Although such searches can be carried out without consent or parental permission, it is good practice, if appropriate to so with the student’s consent and inform parents/carers. Student should be present during the search, where possible.

- The examination of the data/files on a device should go only be confined to establishing the facts of the incident. Any further infringement of personal data may leave the school open to legal challenge.

- If no inappropriate material is found on a device, the Senior Manager may return it to the student.

- Any data, files or images that are believed to be illegal must be passed to the police by the Head Teacher/DSL as soon as practicable, including pornographic images of children, without deleting them.

- Any data, files or images that are not believed to be unlawful, may be deleted or kept as evidence of a breach of the school's behaviour policy, by the Head Teacher/Care Manager or member of the SMT.

- SMT need to ensure the safe keeping of confiscated materials.

12. Monitoring and Review

SMT will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and ensure that full records are kept of incidents involving:

- searches of students or their property
- searches of mobile phones and electronic devices
- the deletion of data/files
- the disposal of items

The SMT will review this policy every 3 years; however, a review of the policy earlier than this may be necessary if the government introduces new regulations, or if recommendations on how the policy might be improved are made. The Governing Body will ratify and monitor the effectiveness of this Policy.

13. References

- DfE guidance: Searching, screening and confiscation, February 2014; updated January 2018
- Residential special schools National minimum standards, April 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, September 2016
- DfE guidance Use of reasonable force, July 2013
RISK ASSESSMENT FORM for evaluating any concerns or potential risks, which might necessitate a search of a student’s possessions, or rooms used by them.

Student’s Name: ___________________________ Date: _____________ Assessment completed by: ___________________________

Countersigned by: 1. ___________________________ 2. ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSE FOR CONCERN</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>POTENTIAL FOR HARM</th>
<th>PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE AT RISK</th>
<th>CONTROLS</th>
<th>FURTHER ACTION</th>
<th>STUDENT’S UNDERSTANDING OF RISK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.e., sharp implements/objects, substances, items belonging to other people/electronic devices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>i.e., student, staff, other students, visitors, etc.</td>
<td>How is this regulated at present?</td>
<td>i.e., search needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Record of search of student possessions and/or rooms used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: ___________________</th>
<th>Time: ________________</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What / Where?</th>
<th>Details of Search</th>
<th>Action Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i.e., What object, implements, other’s possessions, were being searched for; where was the search carried out?)</td>
<td>(i.e., Where the search started and finished, duration of search, any items found and location)</td>
<td>(i.e., Any action needed to maintain safety of student or others, any items removed, safe location to store items found)</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Was the student informed of the search?</th>
<th>YES / NO If no, Why? ____________________________________</th>
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<tr>
<th>Was the student present during the search?</th>
<th>YES / NO If no why? ____________________________________</th>
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<tr>
<th>Name and signature of student (if applicable):</th>
<th>Name: ___________________ Signature: ___________________</th>
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<tr>
<th>Names and signature of staff present during the search:</th>
<th>Name: ___________________ Signature: ___________________</th>
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<th>Name: ___________________ Signature: ___________________</th>
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<tr>
<th>Name and signature of member of Senior Management Team:</th>
<th>Name: ___________________ Signature: ___________________</th>
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