



SEARCH, SURRENDER AND RETENTION POLICY

Outcome statement

We will provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students and staff at school and the hostel.

Scoping

We will use the powers in relation to searches and retaining student property, acting reasonably, in good faith and in the least intrusive manner to achieve a safe environment, which is free from illicit items, including drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, cigarettes, vaping paraphernalia, pornography, weapons, stolen property or any other item that may be harmful or likely to endanger the safety of others. This also applies to items, devices and information stored on devices that is likely to detrimentally affect staff, students or the learning/living environment.

Expectations and limitations

Staff must have a belief on reasonable grounds that a student has an item that is:

- Likely to endanger safety, and/or
 - Likely to detrimentally affect the learning or hostel environment, and/or
 - Harmful
1. A teacher or hostel supervisor may require a student to produce, reveal, surrender an item and/or surrender a device on which information is stored. If items are found, they must be passed to a Deputy Principal/Principal (Assistant Hostel Manager/Hostel Manager) and safely stored or disposed of as appropriate. An incident report will be prepared by the teacher or hostel supervisor and passed to the person managing the case.
 2. If the student does not co-operate the teacher (or hostel supervisor) will seek assistance from a female Deputy Principal/Principal (Assistant Hostel Manager/Hostel Manager) who may conduct a search witnessed by another female member of staff. In the absence of a female Deputy Principal/Principal (Assistant Hostel Manager/Hostel Manager), a search may be conducted by a female Dean or Head of Department (Supervisor).
 3. In conducting a search, the student may be required to remove outer clothing or surrender a bag or other belongings in which it is suspected the item/device is. Staff may not search clothing that the student is still wearing. Bags and pockets should be emptied by the student. If it is suspected that a locker contains any of the items mentioned above then that locker can be opened.
 4. If a serious criminal offence is thought to have been committed and drugs and/or weapons are involved, the Police may be notified and parents will be contacted.

5. If items are found, they may be disposed of or retained as appropriate. Items that are retained are to be safely stored and within a reasonable time returned preferably to a parent or in the case of drugs and/or weapons to the Police. Whether or not items are found, the clothing, bag or other belongings will be returned to the student immediately.
6. If a student refuses to be searched by a Deputy Principal/Principal (Assistant Hostel Manager/Hostel Manager) the student's parents will be contacted and the student will again be asked to co-operate. In the absence of a parent, a Guidance Counsellor may be asked to attend in support of the student.
7. Parents/caregivers will be contacted in all situations involving a search regardless of whether or not items have been found.
8. A report of the incident will be prepared for the Principal by the person managing the case and placed on the student's file. The Principal will report to the Board.
9. Appropriate disciplinary action may be applied at any stage and could include (but is not limited to) a stand-down or suspension.
10. All due care will be taken to ensure that retained items are safely stored. In the event of loss, the school will not be liable.

Related Procedures or Supporting Documentation

[Ministry Guidelines for the surrender and retention of property and searches](#)

[New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990](#)

[S106 Education and Training Act 2020](#)

Reviewed: September 2023

Next review: September 2026
