

PONY PARTNERSHIPS



Search & Confiscate Policy – 2025–2026

Name of Organisation: Pony Partnerships CIC

Venue/Address: All venues

Date of Review: 1 September 2025

Date of Next Review: 31 August 2026

Author: Danielle Mills

Pony Partnerships CIC is committed to maintaining a calm, safe and supportive environment in which learners, staff and visitors feel safe and valued. On occasion, proportionate searching/screening and the confiscation of items is necessary to safeguard welfare and uphold behaviour standards.

When delivering provision under contract to schools/colleges, we follow the law and the commissioning education provider's policy framework on searching, screening and confiscation.

1. Scope & Legal Basis

- **Statutory power to search (without consent)** where there are *reasonable grounds to suspect* a learner has a **prohibited item** or an item specified in our rules.
- **Common-law power to search (with consent)** for other items.
- **Screening** (e.g., metal detector/wand) may be used **without physical contact** and without consent; refusal may be managed under the Behaviour Policy.
- **Human Rights & Equality:** All decisions must be necessary, proportionate and respectful of **Article 8 ECHR** (privacy) and the **Equality Act 2010**. Adjustments must be considered for SEND, disability, trauma history and other vulnerabilities.
- **KCSIE 2025:** Any search that raises safeguarding concerns must be shared with the **DSL/Deputy** and responded to using safeguarding procedures.

2. Prohibited & Searchable Items

Prohibited (by law):

- Knives & weapons; alcohol; illegal drugs; stolen items;
- Any article reasonably suspected to be used to commit an offence, cause injury or damage;
- Tobacco & cigarette papers; fireworks; pornographic images.

Additional items (by PP rules/commissioning school rules):

Items reasonably deemed to undermine safety, welfare, learning, or our therapeutic environment (e.g., mobile phones, vapes, lighters, laser pens, corrosives, non-prescribed medication).

3. Authorisation & Who Can Search

- Only the **Clinical Lead** or *named, authorised staff* may conduct a search.
- Authorisation may be general or item-specific and is recorded internally.
- A **same-sex** member of staff conducts any search **of the person**, with a **witness** present *where practicable*.
- **Limited urgent exception:** If there is a reasonable belief that **serious harm** may occur without an immediate search, and it is not practicable to find a same-sex member of staff or a witness, an authorised staff member may proceed and must **report and record immediately** afterwards.

We do not conduct strip searches. If police consider a strip search necessary, they take responsibility in line with PACE/child safeguarding requirements.

4. Before a Search

1. **Assess urgency & risk** to others and to the learner.
2. **Explain** to the learner: reason, scope, how and where the search will occur; answer questions; seek cooperation.
3. **Consider vulnerabilities** (SEND, medical needs, trauma, cultural needs, menstruation, gender questioning/trans learners). Take reasonable adjustments and use trauma-informed practice.
4. **Consent searches:** If the item is not prohibited by law, seek informed consent. The learner may refuse; manage via Behaviour Policy.
5. **If refusing & risk persists:** Consult Clinical Lead/DSL where practicable; consider whether a without-consent search is lawful and proportionate; consider contacting police.

6. How Searches Are Carried Out

- **Location:** On PP premises or where PP has lawful control (e.g., off-site visit). Choose a private area, away from peers where possible.
- **Extent:** *Outer clothing, pockets and possessions only* (bags, lockers under the learner's control). Outer clothing means not worn wholly next to skin/underwear (e.g., coat, jumper, shoes).
- **Metal detectors/wands:** May be used without physical contact.
- **Hands-off approach:** No intimate contact. If a learner declines to empty pockets or remove outer clothing, reassess risk and next lawful steps.

Search of possessions (bags/lockers):

- Conduct in the **presence of the learner** and a witness (unless urgent serious-harm exception applies).

7. During & After the Search

- **Dignity & respect:** Use calm tone, minimal audience, clear steps.
- **Safeguarding lens:** Consider whether the reason for the search, the search itself, or the *outcome* indicates harm/risk (e.g., exploitation/county lines, self-harm, weapons, bullying, CCE/CSE). **Inform the DSL** promptly.
- **Sanctions & support:** Apply Behaviour Policy consistently. Offer pastoral/therapeutic support, early help, or refer to Children's Social Care/police where indicated.
- **Parents/Carers:** Inform as soon as practicable after any search for prohibited items and advise on outcomes, items seized, and any actions taken.

8. Electronic Devices & Data

- If a device is **reasonably suspected** to contain material that is illegal, harmful, or breaks provider rules, authorised staff may **examine** data **where lawful and proportionate**.
- **Indecent images of children (nudes/semi-nudes):** Staff **must not intentionally view, copy, share or store** such images. **Secure the device**, inform the **DSL**, and follow the UKCIS guidance ("Sharing nudes and semi-nudes") and police advice.
- **Other harmful content** (e.g., serious violence, hate, extremist content): escalate to DSL and consider Prevent/Channel where relevant.
- Data deletion or retention must follow legal powers, safeguarding guidance and our **Data Protection & Privacy Policy** (record rationale and actions).

Pony Partnerships CIC (12448033) c/o 84 Cheal Close, Shardlow, Derby, DE72 2DY
07505951793/info@ponypartnerships.com/www.ponypartnerships.com

9. Confiscation: Retention, Disposal & Chain of Custody

Authorised staff may confiscate any item reasonably suspected to:

- pose a risk
- be prohibited
- breach rules
- or be evidence of an offence.

Handling guidance (summary):

- **Controlled drugs:** Deliver to police *asap*, unless safe disposal is clearly justified and recorded (if in doubt → police).
- **“Other” harmful substances (e.g., nitrous canisters):** Police or safe disposal—record rationale.
- **Alcohol, tobacco, vapes, fireworks:** Retain or dispose; **do not** return to the learner.
- **Pornographic images:** Dispose **unless** suspected illegal (extreme/indecent image of a child) → **police**. Do not view child sexual abuse material.
- **Weapons/evidence of offence:** **Pass to police** asap.
- **Stolen items:** Police, or return to owner where safe/practicable and proportionate (record decision).
- **Items used/likely to be used to cause harm or commit offence:** Police/retain/return/dispose—record risk-based rationale.

Storage & audit:

- Securely bag/label with **date/time, who seized, where found, learner name, description**, and store in a locked location pending disposal/hand-over.
- Keep a **chain-of-custody record** (who handled, when, why).
- Update **Appendix 1** and, for ongoing plans, **Appendix 2**.

10. Record-Keeping, Reporting & Data Protection

- **Record every prohibited-item search** (and any police-led search on site) on **Appendix 1** and our safeguarding reporting system—whether or not items are found.
- **Inform the DSL/Deputy** of all prohibited-item searches/outcomes.
- **Parents/carers:** inform as soon as practicable and note in the record.
- **Data protection:** Records are held securely in line with **UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018** and our Privacy Policy; access on a **need-to-know** basis only.

11. Use of Reasonable Force

- Any use of force must be reasonable, necessary and proportionate to prevent harm, damage or serious disorder.
- Consider vulnerabilities (SEND/medical/trauma).
- Record immediately and inform DSL and parents/carers.
- Staff must follow PP’s behaviour and physical intervention guidance.

12. Safeguarding, Equality & Vulnerability

- Consider needs related to SEND, disability, medical conditions, trauma, culture/faith, and for gender-questioning/trans learners. Seek the least intrusive, most respectful option that still manages risk.
- Any concerns about CCE/CSE, county lines, self-harm, domestic abuse, radicalisation or other significant harms → DSL immediately and refer as appropriate.

Pony Partnerships CIC (12448033) c/o 84 Cheal Close, Shardlow, Derby, DE72 2DY
07505951793/info@ponypartnerships.com/www.ponypartnerships.com

- Maintain a therapeutic, trauma-informed stance.

13. Off-Site & Visits

These guidelines apply during transport, off-site activities and visits where PP has charge of the learner. Plan in advance where screening/searching may be needed; record and communicate roles, escalation routes and how items will be stored/handed to police.

14. Training & Quality Assurance

- Only authorised staff conduct searches; they receive periodic training covering law, dignity & equality, trauma-informed practice, safeguarding (KCSIE 2025), electronic devices, and evidence handling.
- The Clinical Lead/DSL will monitor records, identify patterns, and report themes to management for preventive action.

15. Complaints

Any complaint about searching/screening/confiscation will be handled through the **Complaints Policy**. Allegations/concerns about staff conduct follow the **Allegations/Low-Level Concerns** process and may be referred to the **LADO** where appropriate.

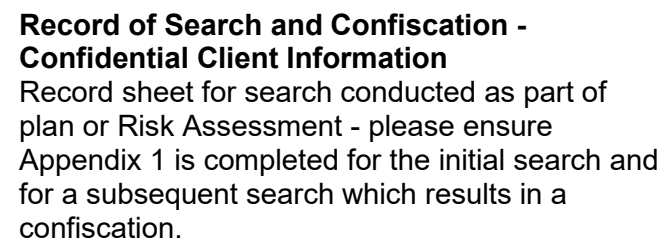
Pony Partnerships CIC (12448033) c/o 84 Cheal Close, Shardlow, Derby, DE72 2DY
07505951793/info@ponypartnerships.com/www.ponypartnerships.com



Appendix 1: Record of Search & Confiscation (Confidential Learner Information)

| | |
|---|--|
| Client Name: | Base: |
| Reason for Search: (delete as appropriate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-off incident • First search as part of plan or Risk Assessment where a search is conducted as part of RA/plan then this will be recorded on Appendix 2 • Where routine search led to confiscation of item | Date and time of search: |
| Where did the search take place? | Search conducted: (delete as appropriate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With consent • Without consent |
| Search conducted by: Name: Signed: Date: Name: Signed: Date: I confirm that this search was conducted in line with the Confiscation and Search Guidelines. | |
| Where items were found as part of this search, please record. | Items found |
| Other points to note: | |
| Actions taken – including retention and disposal of items/referrals to police or other agencies/information shared with parents/review of RA, etc: | |

Pony Partnerships CIC (12448033) c/o 84 Cheal Close, Shardlow, Derby, DE72 2DY
07505951793/info@ponypartnerships.com/www.ponypartnerships.com

[illegible]