



Search & Screening (Metal Detector) Policy

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1. Policy Statement

At Swift Learning, we are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners, staff, visitors and external professionals. We recognise that creating a safe, secure and supportive learning environment is fundamental to enabling young people to engage positively with education, develop confidence and achieve successful outcomes.

As an Alternative Provision, we understand that many of our learners have experienced disruption to their education and may present with a range of social, emotional and behavioural needs. We therefore adopt a proactive approach to safeguarding that focuses on prevention, consistency and positive relationships. Maintaining a safe environment is central to our ethos and supports both the physical safety and emotional wellbeing of everyone attending the provision.

To support this commitment, Swift Learning operates a routine daily metal detector screening procedure for all learners upon arrival at the provision. The purpose of this procedure is to minimise the risk of prohibited or dangerous items entering the learning environment and to provide reassurance to learners, parents, commissioning schools and local authorities that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place.

This policy forms part of Swift Learning's wider safeguarding framework and outlines the procedures for routine metal detector screening and any subsequent searches undertaken to maintain a safe and secure learning environment. Routine screening is a preventative safeguarding measure and is not intended to be punitive or used as a disciplinary sanction. The procedure is applied consistently to all learners, ensuring that no individual is unfairly targeted or discriminated against.

Swift Learning is committed to ensuring that all screening and any subsequent searches are conducted lawfully, respectfully and proportionately, with due regard for the dignity, privacy and welfare of every learner. All staff are expected to carry out these procedures professionally and in accordance with current safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance and the principles set out within this policy.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance relating to safeguarding, health and safety, equality and the welfare of children and young people.

The policy has been informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

3. Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all members of staff have a duty to contribute towards maintaining a safe, secure and supportive learning environment.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy. This includes ensuring that staff receive appropriate training, maintaining oversight of search and screening procedures, reviewing any incidents arising from searches, and ensuring that safeguarding concerns are managed promptly and in accordance with statutory guidance and internal safeguarding procedures.

All staff authorised to undertake routine screening, or searches are responsible for following the procedures outlined within this policy. Searches must be conducted professionally, respectfully and consistently, ensuring that the dignity and welfare of learners remain central throughout the process. Any safeguarding concerns or prohibited items identified during screening must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Parents, carers, commissioning schools and local authorities will be informed of Swift Learning's search and screening procedures before a learner begins their placement. Learners will also be informed during their induction so that they understand the purpose of the procedure and how it contributes to maintaining a safe learning environment.

4. Routine Metal Detector Screening Procedure

Routine metal detector screening forms part of Swift Learning's daily safeguarding procedures and is undertaken each morning before learners enter the learning environment.

Every learner attending Swift Learning will be screened using a handheld metal detector upon arrival. The procedure applies equally to all learners and is implemented consistently regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, previous behaviour or any other protected characteristic. Applying the procedure universally ensures fairness and demonstrates that screening is a routine safeguarding measure rather than a response to individual behaviour or perceived risk.

Learners will be welcomed by staff on arrival and asked to remove everyday metal items, including mobile phones, keys, coins or belts where necessary, before screening takes place. The handheld metal detector will be passed around the outside of the learner's clothing and will not make physical contact with the learner at any point during the procedure.

A minimum of two members of staff will always be present throughout all routine screening procedures and any subsequent searches. One member of staff will conduct the screening whilst the second member of staff will observe the process, provide support where required and act as a witness. This approach promotes transparency, protects both learners and staff, and ensures that all procedures are carried out safely, fairly and consistently.

All screening will be conducted calmly, respectfully and in a manner that preserves the dignity of the learner. Staff recognise that some learners may experience anxiety or distress during the process and will adopt a calm, trauma-informed approach, providing reassurance where necessary. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for learners with identified special educational needs or disabilities whilst ensuring that the safety of the wider learning community is maintained.

5. Searches Following Screening

Where the handheld metal detector identifies the presence of a metal object, the member of staff conducting the screening will initially ask the learner whether they are carrying any everyday items that may have activated the detector, such as keys, coins, jewellery, belts or a mobile phone. Learners will be given the opportunity to remove these items before the screening process is repeated.

Where the detector continues to activate, or where staff have reasonable grounds to believe that a learner may be carrying a prohibited item, the learner will be asked to voluntarily empty their pockets and open any bags or personal belongings for

inspection. Any search undertaken will be conducted respectfully, proportionately and in the presence of the two members of staff involved in the screening process.

Swift Learning will not carry out intimate or intrusive searches. Where staff believe that a learner may be carrying an item that presents an immediate risk to themselves or others, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed immediately. The DSL will assess the situation and determine the most appropriate course of action, which may include contacting parents or carers, the commissioning school, the Local Authority or the Police where necessary.

6. Prohibited Items

Swift Learning is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all learners, staff and visitors. The following items are prohibited from being brought onto the premises:

- Knives or bladed articles.
- Offensive weapons or imitation weapons.
- Illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia.
- Alcohol.
- Tobacco products, cigarettes, vapes and related devices.
- Fireworks or explosive materials.
- Laser devices.
- Stolen property.
- Any item that could reasonably be used to threaten, intimidate or cause harm to another person.

This list is not exhaustive. Swift Learning reserves the right to prohibit any item that is considered to present a risk to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of learners, staff or visitors.

7. Refusal to Participate

Swift Learning recognises that routine metal detector screening forms an essential part of its safeguarding procedures and is a condition of entry to the provision. All learners are expected to cooperate with the daily screening process to help maintain a safe and secure environment for themselves, their peers and staff.

Where a learner refuses to participate in the screening procedure, staff will remain calm and seek to understand the reason for the refusal. The learner will be reminded that the screening process is a routine safeguarding measure applied consistently to every learner and is not intended to be punitive or targeted towards any individual.

If the learner continues to refuse screening, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed immediately. The learner's parent or carer, commissioning school and, where appropriate, the Local Authority will be contacted without delay.

As Swift Learning cannot safely permit access to the provision without completion of the routine screening procedure, the learner will be collected by their parent or carer or returned home in accordance with the agreed arrangements with the commissioning school or Local Authority.

The incident will be recorded and managed in accordance with Swift Learning's Behaviour and Discipline Policy. A reintegration meeting may be arranged with the learner, parent or carer, commissioning school and Local Authority before the learner returns to the provision to ensure expectations are understood and appropriate support is in place.

Repeated refusals to participate in the screening process may result in a review of the learner's placement in partnership with the commissioning school and Local Authority.

8. Recording and Reporting

Swift Learning is committed to maintaining accurate records of all incidents relating to routine screening and any subsequent searches. Recording information appropriately ensures transparency, supports safeguarding practice and enables the provision to identify patterns or emerging concerns.

A Search and Screening Record Form will be completed where:

- A prohibited item is identified.
- A learner refuses to participate in the screening process.
- A further search is undertaken.
- A safeguarding concern arises.
- External agencies, including the Police, are contacted.

The record will include the learner's name, the date and time of the incident, the reason for the search, the outcome, details of any prohibited items located, actions taken and the names of the members of staff present.

Where appropriate, parents or carers, commissioning schools and relevant external agencies will be informed in accordance with Swift Learning's safeguarding procedures.

All records will be stored securely in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and Swift Learning's Confidentiality and Record Keeping procedures.

9. Equality, Dignity and Trauma-Informed Practice

Swift Learning is committed to ensuring that all learners are treated fairly, respectfully and without discrimination throughout the screening process.

Routine screening is applied consistently to every learner regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Applying the procedure universally ensures that no learner is unfairly targeted or stigmatised.

Staff recognise that many learners attending Alternative Provision may have experienced trauma, adverse childhood experiences or disrupted education. Screening procedures will therefore be undertaken using a calm, respectful and trauma-informed approach, recognising the importance of preserving dignity, reducing anxiety and promoting positive relationships.

Where learners have identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), medical needs or communication difficulties, reasonable adjustments will be considered where appropriate whilst maintaining the safety of the wider learning community.

10. Staff Training

Swift Learning is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for carrying out routine screening procedures receive appropriate training and understand their responsibilities under this policy.

Training will include safeguarding and child protection, trauma-informed practice, de-escalation techniques, conflict management, professional conduct during searches, record keeping and the safe operation of handheld metal detector equipment.

Training will form part of the staff induction programme and will be refreshed regularly through Swift Learning's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme. Additional training will be provided where changes in legislation, statutory guidance or operational practice require it.

11. Policy Review and Continuous Improvement

Swift Learning is committed to regularly reviewing its safeguarding procedures to ensure they remain effective, proportionate and compliant with current legislation and recognised best practice.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance or operational practice require amendment.

Feedback from learners, parents and carers, commissioning schools, Local Authorities and members of staff will be considered as part of the review process. Information

gathered through safeguarding audits, incident reviews, quality assurance visits and internal monitoring activities will also be used to inform future improvements.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has responsibility for ensuring that this policy remains current and reflects the ongoing commitment of Swift Learning to safeguarding and continuous improvement.

APPENDIX A – SEARCH AND SCREENING RECORD FORM

Learner Name:

Date:

Time:

Staff Conducting Screening:

Witnessing Staff Member:

Reason for Further Search:

- ☐ Routine detector activation
- ☐ Refusal to participate
- ☐ Safeguarding concern
- ☐ Intelligence received
- ☐ Other

Details:

Outcome

- ☐ No prohibited items found
- ☐ Everyday metal item identified
- ☐ Prohibited item located
- ☐ Parent/Carer informed
- ☐ School informed
- ☐ Local Authority informed
- ☐ Police contacted

Description of Item(s)

Action Taken

Follow-up Required

Staff Signature: _____

DSL Signature: _____

APPENDIX B- PROHIBITED ITEMS GUIDANCE

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