



Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

2009 CHAPTER 22

PART 11

LEARNERS

Power to search for prohibited items

242 Power of members of staff to search pupils for prohibited items: England

(1) After section 550A of the [Education Act 1996 \(c. 56\)](#) insert—

“Powers to search pupils

550ZA Power of members of staff to search pupils for prohibited items: England

- (1) This section applies where a member of staff of a school in England—
 - (a) has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil at the school may have a prohibited item with him or her or in his or her possessions; and
 - (b) falls within section 550ZB(1).
- (2) The member of staff may search the pupil (“P”) or P’s possessions for that item.
- (3) For the purposes of this section and section 550ZC each of the following is a “prohibited item”—
 - (a) an article to which section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 applies (knives and blades etc);
 - (b) an offensive weapon, within the meaning of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953;

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- (c) alcohol, within the meaning of section 191 of the Licensing Act 2003;
 - (d) a controlled drug, within the meaning of section 2 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which section 5(1) of that Act makes it unlawful for P to have in P's possession;
 - (e) a stolen article;
 - (f) an article of a kind specified in regulations.
- (4) In subsection (3)(e) “stolen”, in relation to an article, has the same meaning as it has by virtue of section 24 of the Theft Act 1968 in the provisions of that Act relating to goods which have been stolen.
- (5) In this section and section 550ZB—
- “member of staff”, in relation to a school, means—
 - (a) any teacher who works at the school; and
 - (b) any other person who, with the authority of the head teacher, has lawful control or charge of pupils for whom education is being provided at the school;
 - “possessions”, in relation to P, includes any goods over which P has or appears to have control.
- (6) The powers conferred by this section and sections 550ZB and 550ZC are in addition to any powers exercisable by the member of staff in question apart from those sections and are not to be construed as restricting such powers.

550ZB Power of search under section 550ZA: supplementary

- (1) A person may carry out a search under section 550ZA only if that person—
- (a) is the head teacher of the school; or
 - (b) has been authorised by the head teacher to carry out the search.
- (2) An authorisation for the purposes of subsection (1)(b) may be given in relation to—
- (a) searches under section 550ZA generally;
 - (b) a particular search under that section;
 - (c) a particular description of searches under that section.
- (3) Nothing in any enactment, instrument or agreement shall be construed as authorising a head teacher of a school in England to require a person other than a member of the security staff of the school to carry out a search under section 550ZA.
- (4) A search under section 550ZA may be carried out only where—
- (a) the member of staff and P are on the premises of the school; or
 - (b) they are elsewhere and the member of staff has lawful control or charge of P.
- (5) A person exercising the power in section 550ZA may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for exercising that power.
- (6) A person carrying out a search of P under section 550ZA—
- (a) may not require P to remove any clothing other than outer clothing;
 - (b) must be of the same sex as P;

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- (c) may carry out the search only in the presence of another member of staff; and
 - (d) must ensure that the other member of staff is of the same sex as P if it is reasonably practicable to do so.
- (7) P’s possessions may not be searched under section 550ZA except in the presence of—
- (a) P; and
 - (b) another member of staff.
- (8) In this section—
- “member of the security staff”, in relation to a school, means a member of staff whose work at the school consists wholly or mainly of security-related activities;
 - “outer clothing” means—
- (a) any item of clothing that is being worn otherwise than wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment being worn as underwear; or
 - (b) a hat, shoes, boots, gloves or a scarf.

550ZC Power to seize items found during search under section 550ZA

- (1) A person carrying out a search under section 550ZA may seize any of the following found in the course of the search—
- (a) anything which that person has reasonable grounds for suspecting is a prohibited item;
 - (b) any other thing which that person has reasonable grounds for suspecting is evidence in relation to an offence.
- (2) A person exercising the power in subsection (1) may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for exercising that power.
- (3) A person who seizes alcohol under subsection (1) may retain or dispose of the alcohol and its container.
- (4) A person who seizes a controlled drug under subsection (1)—
- (a) must (subject to paragraph (b)) deliver it to a police constable as soon as reasonably practicable; but
 - (b) may dispose of it if the person thinks that there is a good reason to do so.
- (5) A person who seizes a stolen article under subsection (1)—
- (a) must (subject to paragraph (b)) deliver it to a police constable as soon as reasonably practicable; but
 - (b) may return it to its owner (or, if returning it to its owner is not practicable, may retain it or dispose of it) if the person thinks that there is a good reason to do so.
- (6) In determining, for the purposes of subsections (4) and (5), whether there is a good reason to dispose of a controlled drug or to return a stolen article to its owner, retain it or dispose of it, the person must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- (7) Regulations may prescribe what must or may be done by a person who, under subsection (1), seizes an article of a kind specified in regulations under section 550ZA(3)(f) (or an article which the person has reasonable grounds for suspecting to be such an article).
- (8) A person who, under subsection (1), seizes—
- (a) an article to which section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 applies (knives and blades etc);
 - (b) an offensive weapon; or
 - (c) anything which that person has reasonable grounds for suspecting is evidence in relation to an offence;
- must deliver it to a police constable as soon as reasonably practicable.
- (9) Subsection (8)(c) is subject to subsections (3), (4) and (5) and regulations made under subsection (7).
- (10) In subsections (3) to (8), references to alcohol, a controlled drug, a stolen article, an article to which section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 applies and an offensive weapon include references to anything which the person has reasonable grounds for suspecting is alcohol, a controlled drug, a stolen article, an article to which section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 applies or an offensive weapon.

550ZD Section 550ZC: supplementary

- (1) The Police (Property) Act 1897 (disposal of property in the possession of the police) applies to property which has come into the possession of a police constable under section 550ZC(4)(a), (5)(a) or (8) as it applies to property which has come into the possession of the police in the circumstances mentioned in that Act.
 - (2) Subsection (3) applies where a person—
 - (a) seizes, retains or disposes of alcohol or its container, a controlled drug or a stolen article under section 550ZC; and
 - (b) proves that the seizure, retention or disposal was lawful.
 - (3) That person is not liable in any proceedings in respect of—
 - (a) the seizure, retention or disposal; or
 - (b) any damage or loss which arises in consequence of it.
 - (4) Subsections (2) and (3) do not prevent any person from relying on any defence on which the person is entitled to rely apart from those subsections.
 - (5) Regulations under section 550ZC(7) may make provision corresponding to any provision of this section.”
- (2) In section 569 of the [Education Act 1996 \(c. 56\)](#) (regulations)—
- (a) in subsection (2) after “this Act,” insert “other than one falling within subsection (2A),”, and
 - (b) after subsection (2) insert—

“(2A) A statutory instrument which contains (whether alone or with other provision) regulations under section 550ZA or 550ZC may not be

made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, each House of Parliament.”

- (3) In section 94(3) of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(c. 40\)](#) (provision to apply where items confiscated from pupils) before “550AA” insert “550ZC or”.