



SEARCHES OF PERSON OR PROPERTY POLICY

Given the school's custodial and tutelary responsibility for children, and the Board's intent to preserve a safe environment for all students and staff, the Board recognizes that school officials must have the authority to conduct reasonable searches of students and student property. School officials engaging in searches of students and property shall abide by the following guidelines:

General Guidelines for Searches of Person or Property

Searches of a student's person, personal property (coats, hats, backpacks, book bags, purses, wallets, notebooks, gym bags, etc.) or vehicle may be conducted whenever school officials have reasonable suspicion to believe a student is concealing evidence of a policy violation or criminal activity and the items being searched are capable of concealing such evidence.

The search must be reasonably related to the suspicion and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and nature of the infraction. Circumstances warranting a search include those in which school officials have reasonable suspicion that the student or student property is concealing weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, unsafe contraband or lost/stolen/misplaced items.

All contraband discovered in a search by school officials shall be immediately confiscated and turned over to law enforcement officers if school officials have reason to believe the contraband is related to the commission of a criminal act.

Student Lockers

Students have no right or expectation of privacy in school lockers. While lockers are under the joint control of students and the school, lockers are solely school property and may be searched at any time by school officials with or without cause. Once a locker is opened for search, any search of student belongings contained within the locker must comply with the guidelines for searches of personal belongings mentioned in this policy.

Searches of Student Property, and Student Vehicles

The student may be asked to open personal belongings and vehicles, and to turn over personal property for search by a school official. Whenever possible, searches of student property by school officials shall be witnessed by an objective third party (such as another administrator, teacher, or police officer) to observe that the search is not excessively intrusive.

Searches of Person

- School officials shall make sure the search meets the following guidelines:
- The search shall be conducted in a private area of the school by a school official of the same sex as the student being searched.
- The search shall be observed by an objective third party of the same sex as the student being searched (i.e., administrator, teacher, police officer).
- School officials may ask the student to remove his/her hat, coat, shoes and socks, turn pockets inside out, and roll up sleeves to see if the student is hiding contraband.
- Under no circumstances may school officials require students to remove any other items of clothing or touch students in any way during the search.
- If this limited search does not turn up suspected contraband and school officials have reasonable suspicion that the student is concealing contraband in his/her inner clothing (i.e., hiding drugs, weapons or other contraband underneath shirts, pants or underwear), law enforcement officers shall be summoned immediately to conduct further search and investigation.
- In general, all questioning and searching of students conducted by law enforcement officers shall proceed according to the investigation guidelines in this policy.

Canine Searches

The school principal, in conjunction with local law enforcement officials, may determine when, and if, a specially trained detection canine shall be used in the school to search for drugs, weapons, or other contraband. In creating a proper and effective learning environment within the framework of mutual respect and trust, the school principal should use caution and discretion in determining when to use a drug detecting canine search in the school. No detection canine search shall be used in the school without the permission of the principal.

Students: Sniffing of students by detection canines is considered to be a search under the Fourth Amendment, may be embarrassing or frightening, and shall not be permitted in schools.

Lockers and Vehicles: The sniffing of school lockers or a student's vehicle on school property by detection canines does not constitute a search under the Fourth Amendment. Sniffing by detection canines of lockers

and vehicles in school parking lots may be permitted. A positive alert by a detection canine may be considered reasonable grounds for a school official to conduct a search of the locker or vehicle as outlined in this policy.

Documentation of Searches

School officials shall thoroughly document the details of any search conducted of a student's property or person. Documentation shall be made at the time of the search, or as soon as possible thereafter, and shall include the following:

1. The time, place and date of the search;
2. The reasonable suspicion giving rise to the search (what did school officials suspect to find during the search);
3. The name and title of individuals conducting and observing the search;
4. A statement about evidence that was found or not found as a result of the search;
5. A statement about who took possession of contraband (i.e., police, school, etc.);
6. Information regarding the attempts of school officials to notify parents about the search.