

Procedure - Searches of Students and Their Property

A student is subject to search by a principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee if reasonable grounds exist to suspect that evidence of a violation of the law or school district policy will be uncovered. School staff are required to report a student's suspicious activity to the principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee.

The principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee will begin by asking that the student consent to the search. A student or his/her parents/guardian on the student's behalf may consent to a search at school. If the student or his/her parent/guardian refuses to consent to the search, school officials may proceed to search the student and the student's personal belongings as follows:

- A. Any search of a student and the student's possessions conducted by the principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee must be reasonably related to the discovery of contraband or other evidence of a student's violation of the law or school district policy, governing student conduct. For the purpose of this policy "contraband" means items, materials, or substances the possession of which is prohibited by law or school district policy, including but not limited to, controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, or any object that can reasonably be considered a firearm or a dangerous weapon. A search is required when there are reasonable grounds to suspect a student has a firearm or dangerous weapon on school grounds, transportation or at school events.
- B. The principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee will conduct searches in a manner, which is not excessively intrusive in light of age and sex of the student and the nature of the suspected infractions. No student will be subject to a strip search or body cavity search by school officials.
- C. The principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee will determine at his/her discretion if a student's parent/guardian should be contacted prior to the search. If not, previously notified, a student's parent/guardian will be contacted following a search. Advanced notification of the student's parent/guardian is not required and is at the discretion of the principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee.
- D. The principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee will consult with local law enforcement officials regarding the advisability of a search on school premises by a law enforcement officer if evidence of criminal activity is likely to be found.

Establishing Reasonable Grounds

The following should occur prior to conducting a search:

- A. Identify 1) the student's suspicious conduct, behavior, or activity; 2) the source of the information; and 3) the reliability of the source of information.
- B. If suspicion is confirmed, would such conduct be a violation of the law or school district policy?
- C. Is the student likely to possess or have concealed any item, material, or substance which is itself prohibited or which would be evidence of a violation of the law or school district policy?

Conducting the Search

If the principal, assistant principal, or principal's designee determines that reasonable grounds exist to search a student's clothing, personal effects, desk, locker, assigned storage area, or automobile, the search will be conducted as follows:

- A. If evidence of criminal activity is suspected to be present and criminal prosecution will be recommended if criminal activity is confirmed by the search, consult with law enforcement officials regarding the appropriateness of a search by a law enforcement officer.
- B. If evidence of a violation of district policy is suspected, and if confirmed by the search will be handled solely as a student discipline action, proceed to search by asking the student to remove all items from pockets, purses, handbags, backpacks, gym bags, etc.

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Classification: Priority

Revised Dates: