

USE OF DOGS TO SEARCH SCHOOL PROPERTY

The Board supports the elimination of the possession or use of illegal substances/devices. The Board wants to convey a strong message to the community, faculty, staff, and student body concerning the use or possession of illegal substances.

The Board shall permit the administration to invite law enforcement agencies or other qualified agencies or individuals to search school property with dogs trained for the purpose of detecting the presence of illegal substances, when necessary to protect the health and safety of students, employees or property and to detect the presence of illegal substances or contraband, including alcohol and/or drugs. The use of trained canine sniffing dogs is subject to the following:

1. The administration shall authorize the search and the Principal or his/her designee shall be present while the search is taking place.
2. Parents and students shall be notified of this policy through its inclusion in the student and/or parent handbook.
3. All school property such as lockers, classrooms, parking areas and storage areas may be searched. In addition, personal property such as book bags, backpacks, tote bags, purses and other objects or materials used to transport or store property that are not part of the individual's clothing and are intended to be readily detached from the person and are not on the person may be examined.
 - a. Dogs shall not be used in rooms occupied by persons except for demonstration purposes with the handler present.
 - b. When used for demonstration purposes, the dog may not sniff the person or any individual.
4. Individual(s) shall not be subjected to a search by dogs of their person.
5. Once notification has been given to parents and students, through the inclusion of the policies in the student and/or parent handbook, the school district will have met its obligation to advertise the searches. Additional notices need not be given and actual times or dates of planned searches need not be released in advance.
6. Only the dog's official handler will determine what constitutes an alert by the dog. If the dog alerts on a particular item or place, the student having the use of that item or place or responsibility for it shall be called to witness the search. If a dog alerts on a locked vehicle, the student who brought it onto district property shall be asked to unlock it for inspection.
7. Law enforcement agencies will be given full authorization to investigate and prosecute any person(s) found to be responsible for illegal substances(s) on school property.

(cf. – 5145.12 Search and Seizure)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
54-33n Search of school lockers and property.
10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules.
New Jersey v T.L.O., 53 U.S.L.W. 4083 (1985)

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