

SEARCHES OF STUDENTS AND STUDENT PRIVACY

Searches of Students and Their Property

A student and their property may be searched by a principal or a principal's designee if reasonable grounds exist to suspect that evidence of a violation of the law or school rules will be uncovered. School staff will report a student's suspicious activity to the principal prior to initiating a search, except in emergency situations. A search is required when there are reasonable grounds to suspect a student has a firearm on school grounds, transportation, or at school events.

Per Board Policy 3308, Students and Personal Electronic Devices, any personal electronic device brought to school or school-sponsored events by a student is subject to being searched when school officials have a reasonable suspicion, based on objective and articulable facts, that such a search will reveal a violation of the law or school rules.

Establishing Reasonable Suspicion

A search may occur if the principal or a principal's designee has reasonable suspicion that the search will produce evidence of unlawful activity or a violation of a school rule. The reliability and credibility of the witnesses should be considered when determining the existence of reasonable suspicion.

Conducting the Search

If the principal or the principal's designee determines that reasonable suspicion exists to search a student's clothing, personal effects, automobile, or personal container inside of district property such as an assigned desk, locker, or storage area, the search will be conducted as follows:

- A. If evidence of unlawful activity or a violation of a school rule is suspected the principal or principal designee may proceed with the search by directing the student to remove all items from pockets, purses, handbags, backpacks, gym bags, etc. Strip searches or body cavity searches of the students are never to be conducted.
- B. If reasonably possible, searches will be witnessed by another staff member of the same sex as the student being searched.
- C. A parent or guardian will be notified that a search has been conducted.

Locker, Desk, and Storage Area Searches

Lockers, desks, and storage areas are the property of the school district. Accordingly, students have no expectation of privacy in the lockers, desks, and storage areas they use or are assigned.

Because students have no expectation of privacy in their lockers, desks, and storage areas, principals or principals' designees may search all student lockers, desks, or storage areas at any time without prior notice and without reasonable suspicion that the search will yield evidence of any student's violation of the law or school rule.

Administrative inspections, or health and welfare inspections, may be conducted at any time to locate misplaced library books, textbooks, or other school property or to ensure that all lockers, desks, or storage areas are kept clean and free from potential health or safety hazards. Periodic inspections of lockers will reinforce the district's ownership of lockers, desks, and storage areas and the minimal expectation of privacy students have in the contents of their lockers, desks, and storage areas.

However, to search containers within a student's locker, desk, or storage area, reasonable suspicion must exist that the search will yield evidence of a violation of the law or school rules. A "container" for the purpose of this procedure may include, but is not limited to, an article of clothing, a handbag, purse, backpack, gym bag, or any other item in which contraband material may be concealed.