

METAL DETECTOR WANDS

Purpose

Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District (“Corporation” or “BHMSD”) is committed to maintaining safe, orderly schools, to promote health and safety within the school setting, and to provide a school environment conducive to education. To combat escalating school violence and the potential presence of weapons in our schools, BHMSD may utilize metal detectors to detect firearms, knives, and other weapons. This policy is applicable in all situations in which students are subject to school disciplinary rules pursuant to I.C. 20-33-8-14 including:

- 1) on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, or immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- 2) off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; or
- 3) traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.

Authority

Pursuant to I.C. 35-47-9-2, it is a criminal offense to possess any firearm in or on school property or on a school bus. Pursuant to I.C. 35-47-5-2.5 it is a criminal offense to possess a knife in or on school property or on a school bus. Pursuant to I.C. 35-46-1-10.5 it is a criminal offense for an individual under the age of twenty-one to purchase, possess, or accept an e-cigarette or vaping pen.

Purchase and Training

The Superintendent may recommend the Board of School Trustees purchase metal detectors wands approved for the District’s intended use, shall schedule training and re-training for all personnel using metal detectors, and shall coordinate all District metal detector tests in accordance with the requirements as outlined in the manufacturer’s specifications and these procedures. The Superintendent or designee shall maintain records for the purchase, training, and testing of metal detectors.

Metal Detector Screening Procedures

All students may be subject to screening. Metal detector screenings of students and their belongings shall be conducted in an orderly and safe manner, consistent with industry standards for use of the detectors, and consistent with minimizing intrusion into students’ privacy rights. Students and their personal belongings shall be screened by Corporation employees using a hand-held metal detector (wand) owned by the Corporation. Consistent scanning techniques shall be used for each student. Metal detector searches and any subsequent searches resulting from metal detector activation should be conducted by a school administrator of the same sex as the student being searched. The BHMSD employee conducting the metal detector search should not make contact with the student’s body with the wand.

Prior to being scanned with a wand, a student will be asked to remove any metal objects (e.g. keys, belt buckles, etc.) and set those objects aside. If during the screening of a student the detector is activated, the student shall be asked whether he or she has anything made of metal in the area scanned. If the article is removable (e.g. a set of keys), the student shall be asked to remove the article and the screening repeated. If the detector is again activated and the article cannot be removed (e.g., a belt buckle), the staff member shall visually confirm the student’s explanation. If

the activation cannot be explained or eliminated, then the student and his or her belongings shall be directed to a private area. An expanded search (i.e. a pat down of the student or inspection of a bookbag or purse) shall be conducted by an employee of the same sex as the student. At least one other school employee shall be present during any search. The scope of the search should be focused on detecting a weapon.

All staff members are reminded that the purpose of metal detector screenings is to deter the possession of weapons such as guns, knives or other dangerous objects capable of inflicting bodily harm or injury and possession of metal objects in violation of school rules, such as e-cigarettes or vaping pens. If, for example, during the metal detector screening of a student's bookbag the detector is activated, the search of the bookbag shall be confined to explaining the reason for activation of the detector and limited to those areas inside the bookbag which could reasonably contain a weapon or e-cigarette/vaping pen; envelopes or small containers within the bookbag which could not reasonably contain a weapon or e-cigarette/vaping pen shall not be searched without separate individualized suspicion.

Screenings are not to be used for the purpose of searching students suspected of violation of other school policies and regulations. If during a screening contraband is incidentally discovered (such as tobacco or drugs), the possession of which is a violation of school policy or statute, the items shall be confiscated, and students will be subject to discipline.

BHMSD employees shall not conduct a strip search of a student manually or with any instrument nor remove or arrange any clothing of a student to permit a visual inspection of the student's underclothing, breast, buttocks, or genitalia.

Possession of a firearm, knife or other dangerous object, or illicit metal objects such as e-cigarettes/vaping pens shall subject students to arrest and disciplinary proceedings. These procedures for metal detector screenings for weapons shall be incorporated into each site's school safety plan developed in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies, community leaders, and other interested parties.

Random Metal Detector Screening

Each school building may conduct its own random metal detector screenings of students and their personal belongings (e.g. bookbags, purses), consistent with these procedures. Each principal or administrative designee will be responsible for deciding if screenings will be conducted and for the implementation of screenings based on the security needs of the school building.

The school principal or administrative designee shall determine the frequency that metal detector searches will be conducted (i.e. every fifteenth person who enters the building). The administrators conducting the metal detector searches shall conduct metal detector wand searches on entrants to the building based on the frequency determined by the school principal or administrative designee until the beginning of first period classes. Deviation from the frequency determined by the school principal or administrative designee shall be allowed only in cases of individualized reasonable suspicion.

Individualized Suspicion Screening

The principal or designee may conduct individualized metal detector screenings on students or their personal belongings when the principal or designee has a reasonable suspicion that a search will turn up evidence that the student has violated a school rule or Indiana law. "Individualized reasonable suspicion" means a belief based upon the totality of circumstances which, when taken together in the context of the school building or activity in which they occur, make the student or property searched more likely than a student or property selected at random to contain or possess evidence of a violation of state or federal law, a violation of a school rule, or a condition that endangers the safety or health of the student or others. Information provided by other persons may be considered by an administrator as a part of the administrator's individualized reasonable suspicion where the administrator has reason to believe the information is credible.

The principal or designee will present their reason for individualized suspicion prior to the search. Individualized screenings shall be conducted consistent with the District's A100 Non-Discrimination Policy. Reasonable suspicion shall not be substantiated in any way by a student's protected class.

Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District

Adopted: April 21, 2025