

Community Relations

Law Enforcement Officials

Schools are responsible for students during school hours. This responsibility includes protecting each student's constitutional rights, assuring due process in questioning and arrest, protecting students from any form of illegal coercion, and keeping students safe from physical and emotional harm. Because of the many support services that local law enforcement agencies provide to the schools, staff, and students, the State Board of Education supports the best possible relationship with those agencies consistent with the system's responsibilities to protect the legal rights of staff and students.

This policy is intended to balance the needs of school and police officials. The reduction of ambiguity and confusion in how these officials interact will provide an optimal environment for education while ensuring that the public safety needs of the school and community are adequately met. Priority shall be given to law enforcement's involvement in threat assessments and in the planning and implementation of school district emergency plans, security procedures, intervention, and crisis response.

Law enforcement officials are viewed as key community stakeholders in developing and implementing a comprehensive emergency readiness plan for the district's schools.

Interview with Students

Police interviews generally will not take place on school grounds. However, if the police do indicate that an interview on school grounds is necessary, school authorities may cooperate. When the interview involves a juvenile, a parent/guardian must be present. The exceptions to this rule are (a) if the student is being interviewed as a victim and/or (b) if there is an overriding immediate public safety concern. If a student under the age of 16 is being interviewed by the police and the parent/guardian cannot be present, a member of the school staff should be present.

When police are investigating possible criminal acts that occurred, or may have occurred, on school property, or while under the jurisdiction of the school district, they may question students at school when the following procedures are observed:

1. Students will be questioned as confidentially and inconspicuously as possible.
2. An attempt will be made to notify the student's parents/guardians so that they may be present during the questioning. The school Principal, or his/her designee, will be present. The administrator shall maintain a written record of all such interviews conducted.
3. Preferably, the officer doing the questioning will wear civilian clothes.

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When investigating a possible criminal violation occurring off school grounds or not part of a school program, police will be encouraged to question students in their homes; however, they may be permitted to question students in the schools when the procedures outlined in 1-3 above are observed. Police will make every attempt to minimize distractions or disruption of school routines during the performance of their duties.

Arrest of Students

At no time will a student be released to an officer without one of the following: (a) a warrant; (b) a court order; (c) arrest; (d) protective custody resulting from a child abuse investigation; (e) permission of the parent/guardian.

Weapons

In cases where a student is suspected of carrying a dangerous weapon, and there is a safety issue inherent in the search process, the student should be secured in a private area, and the police should be contacted to conduct the search.

If a search is conducted by a school official and a weapon is found, weapons that are illegal should be turned over to the police immediately by the school official. Illegal weapons include knives with over a four-inch blade, dirk knives, switchblade knives, martial arts weapons, and firearms. Ammunition should also be immediately turned over to the police. Weapons that are not illegal but are a violation of school policy may be retained by the Principal.

Designation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures regarding this policy, including a process to ensure that appropriate staff have been informed, and to establish lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies to effect necessary cooperation toward ensuring the security of the school facilities and the safety of students and staff.

(cf. 5145.12 Search/Seizure)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221 Boards of Education to prescribe rules

53a-185 Loitering in or about school grounds: Class C Misdemeanor

54-76j Disposition upon adjudication as a youthful offender

Policy adopted: **2/25/26**

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Relations with Law Enforcement Agencies

School Police Cooperation

District officials are committed to cooperation with police officials and other law enforcement authorities to maintain a safe and secure school environment. Police officials have limited authority to interview or search students in schools or at school functions, or to use school facilities in connection with police work. Police, however, shall be involved in threat assessment activities and in the planning and implementation of school and district emergency plans, security, and crisis response activities.

This regulation is intended to balance the needs of school and police officials. The reduction of ambiguity and confusion in how these officials interact will provide an optimal environment for education while ensuring that the public safety needs of the school and community are adequately met. Police officials may enter school property or a school function to question or to search a student or to conduct a formal investigation involving students only if they have (1) a search or arrest warrant; or (2) probable cause to believe a crime has been committed on school property or at a school function; or (3) been invited by school officials.

Generally, police should be notified immediately of any crime. Police will make every attempt to minimize distractions or disruption of school routines during the performance of their duties. There may be instances where the transgression is so slight that the school administrator can resolve the issue himself/herself. Examples of crimes that fall into this category are theft of pocket change, minor vandalism, or minor physical altercations in which there is no injury or pain inflicted upon either participant.

Event and Suggested Action:

Vandalism, Breaking, Entering, etc.

Police should be notified immediately. (cf. 5131.5 – Vandalism)

Alcohol, Drugs, etc.

The suspected drug or alcohol should be secured by the building administrator and given directly to the responding police officer. The police officer will sign a receipt and give it to the building administrator. Prescription drugs out of the container should be seized, and the prescription confirmed via the subscribing doctor. If the prescription is not valid, the drug should be seized, and the police should be notified. (cf. 5131.6 - Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco)

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Loitering

As long as the school grounds are posted, "no trespassing," warnings prior to arrest are not required. Notification of police and requests for arrest are within the discretion of the building administrator.

Confrontations

Confrontations where students become involved in loud, tumultuous behavior but do not assault another are a violation of the law, and police can arrest them for this behavior. The decision to call the police and request an arrest is within the discretion of the building administrator.

Assaults

Physical altercations in which students are injured or in which pain has been inflicted upon another should be reported to the police as soon as practicable. The district/school crisis management plan may be activated.

Weapons

Confiscated weapons that are illegal in themselves should be turned over to the police department immediately by the school official who seized them. This category of weapons includes knives with over a four-inch blade, dirk knives, switchblade knives, martial arts weapons, and firearms. Ammunition should also be immediately turned over to the police. Any evidence or information relative to firearms in the school should be immediately relayed to the police. Weapons that are not illegal in themselves but are a violation of school policy. Police notification in these instances is within the discretion of the school administrator. (cf. 5131.7 - Weapons and Dangerous Instruments)

Bomb Scare Suspect Devices

Do not handle suspected devices. Notify the Superintendent's office and police. Police will notify the Fire Department. A building check will be completed by custodial staff. The building administrator will decide whether or not to evacuate following discussions with the police and fire officials. The administrator will notify the Superintendent of his/her decision.

Civil Disobedience

When known in advance, the school and police should plan. Picketing is legal, whereas blocking traffic, etc., is illegal. Police officials may be requested to assist in controlling disturbances at school, and if necessary, to take students or other persons into custody.

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Motor Vehicles, Parking Lots

Police routinely patrol parking lots and may arrest or summon individuals in said lots. Students involved in motor vehicle accidents in parking lots that result in personal injury or over \$400.00 in damages are required to report the same. (cf. 5131.3 - Student Driving/Parking)

Police Interviews of Juveniles

When the interview involves a juvenile, the police will usually arrange to have a parent/guardian present. The exception to this rule is (a) if the student is being interviewed as a victim and/or (b) if there is an overriding immediate public safety concern. If a student under the age of 16 is being interviewed by the police and the parent/guardian cannot be present, the student may, at his/her request, have a member of the school staff present. Students who are questioned by police officials on school property or at a school function will be afforded the same rights they have outside the school. This means they (1) must be informed of their legal rights; (2) may remain silent if they so desire; and (3) may request the presence of an attorney.

Child Abuse

School officials will notify the Department of Children and Families and the police of suspected child abuse cases. If staff members have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused by a school employee, they must report the abuse to the Superintendent, who will notify the DCF and police. (cf. 5141.4 - Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect)

Extracurricular Activities

Police assigned on-site have communications if additional police resources are needed. Police officials assigned to extracurricular activities shall report to the school administrator to discuss appropriate monitoring procedures.

Arrest Warrants

There are times when the police may decide to pick up a student due to a warrant being issued for his/her arrest. Once notified of an outstanding Arrest Warrant for a student, the student should be escorted from class by school personnel and remain in a secure office until the police arrive. The arrested student will be removed from the school in a way that minimizes embarrassment to the student and any disruption of the school routine. When a student is removed from school by law enforcement officers for any reason, school officials will make every reasonable effort to notify the student's parent/guardian or legal custodian. The school officials will document such efforts in writing.

Confidential Police Records

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Police officials are prohibited by state and federal law from disclosing confidential juvenile arrest information or using the police computer network to obtain information relative to registration numbers, home addresses, etc.

Search of Students

School officials may search students, bags, lockers, desks, etc., using the established "reasonable suspicion" standard. In cases where a student is suspected of carrying a dangerous weapon, and there is a safety issue inherent in the search process itself, the police should conduct the search after the student is secured in an office. (cf. 5145.12 - Search and Seizure)

Each year, the administration will meet with local law enforcement officials to discuss:

1. To whom the school/law enforcement official should call for suspected violations of the law occurring on district property or other common needs;
2. How school representatives should handle evidence of a suspected crime/contraband, etc.;
3. Board policy and procedures related to law enforcement officials' requests for access to question students on district property and district notification requirements;
4. Applicable provisions of district emergency plans and security procedures;
5. Special event needs.

Notification of a Student's Arrest

Pursuant to the requirements of C.G.S. 10-233h, as amended by Public Act 94-221, Public Act 95-304 and Public Act 97-149, whenever the Superintendent receives oral, followed by written notification from the local police department or state police that a student was arrested for a Class A misdemeanor, a felony, or for selling, carrying, or brandishing a facsimile firearm, he/she shall maintain the written report in a secure location and the information in the report shall be maintained as confidential in accordance with Section 46b-124. The Superintendent may disclose such information, when reported during the school year, only to the Principal of the school in which the student is enrolled or the supervisory agent of any other school in which the student is enrolled.

The Principal or supervisory agent may disclose such information only to special service staff or a consultant, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, or social worker, for the purposes of assessing the risk of danger posed by the person to other students, school employees, or property and effectuating an appropriate modification of such person's educational plan or placement for disciplinary purposes. Such information with respect to a child under sixteen years of age shall be confidential in accordance with 46b-124 and shall only be disclosed as provided in this section and shall not be further disclosed.

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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules.

10-233a through 10-233s re. student suspension, expulsion.

10-233g(b) Boards to report school violence.

10-233h Arrested students. Reports by police to the superintendent, disclosure, and confidentiality.

17a-101 Protection of children from abuse.

17a-102 Report of danger of abuse.

46b-124 Confidentiality of records of juvenile matters. Exception

53-206c Sale, carrying, and brandishing of facsimile firearms prohibited. Class B misdemeanor.

53a-185 Loitering in or about school grounds: Class C Misdemeanor.

Reports of principals to the police authority.

New Jersey v T.L.O., 53 U.S.L.W. 4083 (1988), 469 U.S. 325; 105 S.Ct 733.

54-76j Disposition upon adjudication as a youthful offender.

Regulation approved: **2/25/26**