Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in March	**Questioning Students and Searches**	**6.303**	**07/13/26**
		Rescinds:	Issued: **06/09/25; 05/12/25; 06/12/23; 07/08/13; 11/11/02**

QUESTIONING BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Students may be questioned by teachers or principals about any matter pertaining to the operation of a school and/or the enforcement of its rules. Questioning shall be conducted discreetly and under circumstances which will avoid unnecessary embarrassment to the student. Any student answering falsely or evasively or refusing to answer a question may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension.

If a student is suspected or accused of misconduct or infraction of the student code of conduct, the principal may question the student without the presence of parent(s)/guardian(s).

INTERROGATIONS BY POLICE AT ADMINISTRATOR'S REQUEST

If the principal has requested assistance by law enforcement to investigate a crime involving his/her school, the police may interrogate a student suspect in school during school hours. The principal shall first attempt to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student unless circumstances require otherwise. However, the interrogation may proceed without attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s), but the principal/designee shall be present during the interrogation.[1]

POLICE-INITIATED INTERROGATIONS

If the police deem circumstances of sufficient urgency to interrogate students at school for unrelated crimes committed outside of school hours, the police department should first contact the principal regarding the planned interrogation and inform him/her of the probable cause to investigate. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the interrogation unless circumstances require otherwise. The interrogation may proceed without attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s), but the principal/designee shall be present during the interrogation.

SEARCHES BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

The school principal shall authorize all searches at the outset per state law.[2] All principal initiated searches shall be conducted by a school security officer, or a school administrator or school employee designated by the Director of Schools/Designee who has completed the state required orientation and training.[2,3] The following conditions shall apply to principal initiated searches:

1. All the following standards of reasonableness must be met:
    a. A particular student has violated school policy;

b. The search will yield evidence of the violation of school policy or will lead to finding dangerous weapons, drugs, or drug paraphernalia;
c. The search is in pursuit of legitimate interests of the school in maintaining order, discipline, safety, supervision, and education;
d. The search is not conducted for the sole purpose of discovering evidence to be used in criminal prosecution; and
e. The search shall be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive considering the age and sex of the student (Sex shall be defined as the "immutable characteristics of the person's reproductive system that identify the person as male or female, as determined by anatomy and genetics existing at the time of birth.") as well as the nature of the alleged infraction;[4]

2. A school administrator shall be on-site at any principal-initiated search;

3. A school administrator shall oversee the search and may end the search at any time; and

4. If a student is under the age of eighteen (18), the principal must notify the student's parent or guardian within a reasonable time of the search.[7]

If a school resource officer searches a student, based on having probable cause, the principal shall notify the Director of Schools/designee.[5]

In order to ensure a safe and secure learning environment, the Director of Schools/Designee shall develop procedures regarding the searching of students, lockers, vehicles, and containers which are consistent with state law. The Director of Schools/Designee shall develop additional procedures to ensure compliance with all of the provisions of the School Security Act of 1981.[6]

Legal References

1. TCA 49-6-4203(b)
2. TCA 49-6-4204(a); TCA 49-6-4205(a)
3. TCA 49-6-4212; Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 1040
4. TCA 49-6-4205(b); Public Acts of 2026, Chapter No. 938
5. State v. R.D.S., No. M200801724COAR3JV, 2009 WL 2136324, at *1 (Tenn. Ct. App. July 16, 2009)
6. TCA 49-6-4201; Tenn. Op. Att'y Gen. No. 14-21 (February 24, 2014)
7. TCA 49-6-4205(a)

Cross References

Traffic and Parking Controls 3.403
Procedural Due Process 6.302
Reporting Child Abuse 6.409