

INTERROGATIONS AND SEARCHES

Searches of School Property Assigned to a Student

Students shall have no expectation of privacy in any in-school storage supplied by the Board and in those areas and instances set forth in this policy.

The lockers supplied by the Board and used by the pupils are the property of the Board of Education. Therefore, the lockers and the contents of all lockers are subject to random search at any time without regard to whether there is a reasonable suspicion that any locker or its contents contains evidence of a violation of a criminal statute or a school rule.

No personal lock may be used if the school issues locks or a built-in lock is provided, unless approved by the principal or his/her designee. If a personal lock is used, the student is required to provide the combination and/or key to the building principal or his/her designee.

The Board directs that the following notice be posted in a conspicuous place in each school building that has lockers:

“The lockers supplied in this school and used by the pupils are the property of the Board of Education. Therefore, the pupil lockers are subject to a random search at any time without regard to whether there is a reasonable suspicion that any locker or its contents contains evidence of a violation of a criminal statute or a school rule.”

Principals may conduct a routine inspection at least annually of lockers.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this policy, the principal of any school or his/her designee may search at any time the locker of any pupil and the contents of any locker of any pupil in the school if the principal reasonably believes that the locker or its contents contains evidence of a violation of a criminal statute or school rule, or if an emergency situation exists or appears to exist that immediately threatens the health or safety of any person, or threatens to damage or destroy any property under the control of the Board and if a search of lockers and the contents of the lockers is reasonably necessary to avert that threat or apparent threat.

Searches of a Student's Person or Personal Property by School Personnel

School authorities may search the person or property, including vehicles of a student, with or without the student's consent, whenever they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the search is required to discover evidence of a violation of law or of school rules. The extent of the search will be governed by the nature of the alleged infraction, the objective of the search, and the age and sex of the student. A search of a student's person or intimate personal belongings shall be conducted by a person of the student's gender in the presence of another staff member of the same gender.

A request for the search of a student or a student's possessions will be directed to the building principal or designee. Unless circumstances do not permit such a search, searches should be conducted in the presence of the student and another staff member.

The principal or designee shall be responsible for the prompt recording in writing of each student search, including the reasons for the search; information received that established the need for the search; the persons present when the search was conducted; any substances or objects found; and the disposition made of them. A written copy shall immediately be forwarded to the Superintendent. The building principal shall be responsible for the custody, control, and disposition of any illegal or dangerous substance or object taken from a student.

Searches of Student Property by Police

A law enforcement agency is generally required to produce a warrant prior to conducting any search of the person or property of a student kept on school premises. However, when the police have probable cause to believe that a student is in possession of unlawful or dangerous items, a search may be conducted without a previously issued warrant.

Use of Canines for Detection of Evidence of Violation of Laws or School District Rules

Since random searches have a positive impact on reducing drugs, weapons, and other criminal activity in the schools, it is the policy of the Board to permit building administrators to search any locker and its contents as the administrator believes necessary by the use of properly trained canines to detect evidence of the violation of laws or school district rules. Canine detection must be conducted in collaboration with law enforcement authorities, and the canines may be used to sniff lockers, automobiles, other places on school district premises, and students themselves for the presence of such evidence, according to the guidelines set forth below.

Lockers, Automobiles, and other Places

Properly trained canines may be used at any time to sniff lockers, automobiles, and other places on school district premises for evidence of the violation of laws or school district rules. If a canine indicates the presence of evidence of the violation of laws or school district rules in a locker, automobile, or other place on school district premises, that locker, automobile, or other place, as well as its contents, may be searched for such evidence. A notice shall be posted in a conspicuous place which states:

“Motor vehicles driven by students to school and parked on school property are subject to random search by dogs trained to detect the presence of drugs. These searches may be conducted without regard to whether there is a reasonable suspicion that any motor vehicle or its contents contains evidence of a violation of a criminal statute or a school rule.”

One of the conditions for granting permission for a student to bring a student-operated vehicle onto school premises is written consent by the student driver, the owner of the vehicle, and the parent of the student to allow search of that vehicle. Refusal by any of the parties to provide or allow access to a vehicle at the time of a search request shall be cause for terminating the privilege without further hearing.

Students

If there is a reasonable basis for suspecting that a particular student has committed, or is committing, a violation of a law or school district rule, a properly trained canine may be used to detect evidence of that violation by sniffing that student. If a canine indicates the presence of evidence of the violation of laws or school district rules on the student's person, the student may be searched for evidence of the suspected violation. Any such search must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and must not be excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student, as well as the nature of the suspected violation.

The foregoing policy shall be included in the student handbook that is given to each student and posted in every building.

Interrogations by Law Enforcement Agencies

- A. The questioning of students by law enforcement agencies is limited to situations where parental consent has been obtained or attempted, or the school official has made an independent determination that reasonable grounds exist for conducting an interrogation during school hours with or without notifying the parent or guardian.
- B. Interrogations shall be conducted in private.
- C. If a parent request, or parental contact has not been made, a school official will request to be present when an interrogation takes place within the school.
- D. When the law enforcement agency feels it is necessary to remove a child from school, parental consent should first be obtained or a warrant, court order, or other legal document should be produced, which would give them authority to remove the child without parental consent. If the circumstances make it possible to make this notification to the parents, the principal or his/her designee should do so.
- E. The Police Department should always be notified by the school principal whenever a student is involved in any type of criminal activity. When the principal learns of this involvement, he should notify the juvenile officer or detective bureau of the Police Department. The school should not attempt to handle matters which are properly in the realm of the Police Department.

- F. The situations listed below are examples of situations in which it is appropriate to call the police, and their support should be expected. The Superintendent or designee should be advised of any such situation as soon as feasible.
1. refusal of a person to leave school property after being requested to do so by the appropriate school authority
 2. theft—particularly if items are of value and insurance claims will be filed
 3. obvious crime
 4. arson
 5. assaults or serious fighting—if not controlled or if serious injury results
 6. possession of a dangerous weapon
 7. possession of alcohol or drugs
 8. sale or distribution of controlled substances
 9. blackmail, threatening, or extortion of students or staff members
 10. bona fide threat against a person’s life or threats of terrorist acts, bomb scares, etc.
 11. child abuse or molestation
 12. mass walkout from or sit-in on school property—if not controlled or if property damage or personal injury result

LEGAL REFS: O.R.C. §3313.20

Adopted: July 18, 2006