

QUESTIONING AND SEARCHES OF STUDENTS ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide guidelines for the conduct of student questioning and searches by school administrators. These are guidelines only and may be adjusted within reasonable and lawful limits on a case-by-case basis.

A. Questioning by School Administrators

1. School administrators are under no obligation to notify a student's parents/guardians prior to questioning a student regarding alleged violations of Board policies, school rules and/or federal/state laws. If law enforcement officers are involved, refer to policy KLG - Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities.
2. School administrators shall inform the student of the reasons for the questioning and provide an opportunity for the student to respond to any allegations. School administrators shall make a reasonable effort to question the student in a location out of the sight and hearing of other students.
3. If a student fails to cooperate, lies, misleads or threatens any person during questioning, he/she may be subject to additional disciplinary action.

B. Searches of Outer Clothing and/or Personal Belongings in Student's Immediate Possession

1. School administrators are authorized to search students and/or personal property in the student's immediate possession when, in their judgment, there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has violated or is violating the Board policies, school rules and/or federal/state laws.
2. All searches of students and/or personal property shall be authorized and conducted by a school administrator in the presence of a witness, except where the circumstances render the presence of a witness impractical.
3. Searches should be reasonably related to the suspected violation and no more intrusive than necessary to discover the evidence for which the search was instigated. Searches may include the request to the student to remove items from their outer clothing (e.g., pockets, jacket, shoes, hat). Searches may also include personal belongings (e.g., purse, backpack, gym bag, lunch bag). If the search discloses evidence, a broader search may be justified.

4. Searches which disclose evidence that a student has violated Board policies or school rules will be addressed through school disciplinary procedures. Evidence of violation of federal/state laws will result in school disciplinary actions and/or be forwarded to law enforcement authorities for possible investigations/prosecution.
5. School administrators are required to document all searches and items seized/impounded on the Student Search Form or by another reasonable method.

C. Searches of Lockers, Desks and Other School Facilities

1. School staff, students and parents shall be informed of this policy/procedure on an annual basis.
2. School administrators shall consult with the Superintendent prior to conducting random searches.
3. Searches of individual student lockers, desks or other storage facilities and their contents based upon reasonable suspicion will be conducted in the presence of the student and a witness, if practical under the circumstances of the search.
4. Searches which disclose evidence that a student has violated Board policies or school rules will be addressed through school disciplinary procedures. Evidence of violation of federal/state laws will result in school disciplinary action and/or be forwarded to law enforcement authorities for possible investigation/prosecution.
5. School administrators are required to document all searches and items seized/impounded on the Student Search Form or by another method.
6. The School Board Chairperson will be notified of all school-wide searches.

D. Involvement of Law Enforcement Authorities

1. School administrators have the discretion to request the assistance of law enforcement authorities in accordance with Board policy.

Cross Reference: JIH-E: Student Search Checklist
KLG: Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

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