

The constitutional rights of students do not stop at the schoolhouse gates. Therefore, students have a right to be protected from *unreasonable* searches by school officials. However, it is the intent of the board of trustees to provide a safe and orderly environment for all students, conducive to the pursuit of educational goals. As a result, it may be necessary for school officials to search a student, his/her personal belongings, locker, desk, or vehicle, when it is in the interest of the overall welfare of other students or is necessary to preserve the good order and discipline of the school.

Only district personnel authorized by the superintendent may conduct a search pursuant to this policy. This policy applies to only those searches conducted by school officials; it does not apply to searches by law enforcement officers. Where appropriate, the superintendent or designee may request the assistance of law enforcement officials to conduct inspections and searches of student lockers and desks, parking lots, and other school property and equipment for illegal drugs, weapons, and other illegal or dangerous substances or materials.

## **DEFINITIONS**

“Contraband” means all substances or materials which students are prohibited from possessing by district policy. Examples include, but are not limited to, cell phones, beepers, and articles containing gang symbols, tobacco, vapes, alcohol, and illegal drugs.

“Reasonable suspicion” means that the school official initiating the search has a well-founded suspicion—based on objective facts that can be articulated—of either criminal activity or a violation of district policy by a particular student(s). Reasonable suspicion is more than a mere hunch or supposition.

## **RANDOM SEARCHES**

In the interest of maintaining safe and drug-free schools, school officials may conduct random or “blanket” searches of student lockers, student belongings, desks, and the school parking lot. School officials will conduct such searches in a random and systematic manner that is minimally intrusive, and it is not required that reasonable suspicion exist.

The superintendent or designee will develop and implement a “lottery” system by which lockers, desks, student belongings, and vehicles will be randomly selected to be searched. Random searches may be conducted for any reason at any time without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Random searches may involve the use of drug dogs, metal detectors, or surveillance cameras authorized by the superintendent or designee.

The building principal, designee or other authorized school personnel shall have individualized reasonable suspicion based upon specific and articulated facts to believe that (i) the student personally possesses or is in possession of some item that poses an immediate risk or serious harm to the student, school officials, or others at the school; or (ii) the student has violated or is violating the law or the district's student conduct rules.

The search based on reasonable suspicion must be reasonable in its scope. The areas or items to be searched and the methods utilized must be reasonably related to finding physical evidence of the crime or violation of district policy. The search must not be excessively intrusive, given the age and gender of the student and the circumstance of the search.

School officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain the consent of a student (if over 18) or their parent/guardian before initiating a reasonable suspicion search, unless the circumstances constitute an emergency. When it is not feasible to contact the student's parent/guardian prior to a reasonable suspicion search, the building principal or designee will attempt to contact the parent/guardian as soon as possible following the search.

### **STUDENT'S PERSON OR POSSESSIONS**

At any time when the student is on school property or at a school-sponsored event, school officials may search the student's person or possessions (backpack, purse, etc.) if the school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of illegal or contraband materials or is otherwise secreting evidence of a crime or violation of district policy.

Such searches shall be conducted in an appropriate manner, in private and witnessed by another adult. Students may be required to remove outer clothing (jacket, shoes, etc.) and empty pockets as part of the search. If the search is of the student's person ("pat-down" search), the school official conducting the search and the witness must be of the same sex as the student. Under no circumstances is a school official authorized to conduct a "strip search" of a student.

### **LOCKERS**

Lockers assigned to students are the property of the school district and remain under the control of the district at all times. The student will be responsible for the proper care and use of the locker assigned for his or her use. Students are prohibited from using a locker for the storage of illegal, contraband, or potentially harmful items, including, but not limited to, weapons, drugs, and alcohol.

School officials may randomly open and inspect lockers for any reason at any time. If the random search produces evidence of criminal activity or violation of district policy, it may serve

as a basis for a reasonable suspicion search of the locker's contents, including the student's property.

School officials may open and inspect lockers when there is reasonable suspicion that the lockers may contain illegal or contraband materials, other evidence of a crime or violation of district policy, or items which may be a threat to safety or security. Searches of lockers, whether random or reasonable suspicion, may be conducted without notice, without consent, and without a search warrant.

### **AUTOMOBILES**

Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not of right. School officials are authorized to conduct routine patrols of school parking lots, inspecting the exteriors of vehicles parked on school property. The interiors of vehicles on school property may be searched whenever an authorized school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal or contraband materials, other evidence of a crime or violation of district policy, or items which may be a threat to safety or security, are contained inside. Such patrols and searches may be conducted without notice, without consent, and without a search warrant.

### **USE OF DRUG DOGS**

The district may elect to use specially trained drug dogs to alert the dog's handler to the presence of controlled substances, at the discretion of the superintendent or designee. The use of a drug dog shall comply with district policy and applicable law.

The drug dogs will be present for the purpose of detecting controlled substances in lockers, personal items or vehicles on district property only when there are no students or employees present. Only the trained dog's handler will determine what constitutes an alert by the dog.

A drug dog's alert constitutes reasonable suspicion for the district officials to search the lockers, personal items or vehicles. Such a search by district officials may be conducted without notice or consent, and without a search warrant.

### **SEIZURE OF CONTRABAND OR ILLEGAL MATERIALS**

School officials may seize and retain, or turn over to law enforcement officials, any contraband or illegal items, or evidence of a crime or violation of district policy, found as a result of any search conducted pursuant to this policy or an age-appropriate summary in the student handbook.

Students and parents/guardians shall be informed of this policy at the beginning of each school year through publication of the policy or an age-appropriate summary in the student handbook.



**LEGAL REFERENCE:**

Idaho Code Sections

18-3302D – Possessing Weapons or Firearms on School Property

33-512 – Governance of Schools

33-6001 – Parental Rights

*New Jersey v. TLO*, 469 U.S. 325 (1985)

*Tinker v. Des Moines*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969)

**CROSS-REFERENCE:**

540 – Maintenance of Orderly Conduct

549 – Prohibition of Gang Activities

551 – Student Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use

639 – Parental Rights in Education

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