

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

As necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of students and staff, school officials may search students, their property, and/or district property under their control, and may seize illegal, unsafe, and prohibited items. The Governing Board requires that discretion, good judgment, and common sense be exercised in all cases of search and seizure.

Individual Searches

School officials may search individual students, their property, and district property under their control, when there is a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence that the student is violating the law, Board policy, administrative regulation, or other rules of the district or the school.

Employees shall not conduct strip searches or body cavity searches of any student. (Education Code 49050)

Searches of individual students shall be conducted in the presence of at least two district employees.

The principal or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of a student subjected to an individualized search as soon as possible after the search.

(cf. 5145.11 - Questioning and Apprehension)

When possible, staff may use a metal detector when searching an individual for weapons.

Student Lockers/Desks

The principal or designee may conduct a general inspection of school properties that are within the control of students, such as lockers and desks, on a regular, announced basis, with students standing by their assigned lockers or desks. Any items contained in a locker or desk shall be considered to be the property of the student to whom the locker or desk was assigned.

Because lockers and desks are under the joint control of the student and the district, school officials shall have the right and ability to open and inspect any school locker or desk without student permission or prior notice when they have reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of illegal possessions or activities or when odors, smoke, fire and/or other threats to health, welfare, or safety emanate from the locker or desk.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE (continued)

Use of Metal Detectors

The Board believes that the presence of weapons in the schools threatens the district's ability to provide the safe and orderly learning environment to which district students and staff are entitled. The Board also believes that metal detector searches offer a reasonable means to keep weapons out of the schools and mitigate the fears of students and staff.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures that ensure that metal detector searches are conducted in a consistent manner that minimizes or eliminates arbitrary and capricious enforcement by school officials.

(cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities)

(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)

(cf. 5131.7 - Weapons and Dangerous Instruments)

(cf. 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)

Use of Drug-Detection Dogs

In an effort to keep the schools free of drugs, the district may use specially trained nonaggressive dogs to sniff out and alert staff to the presence of substances prohibited by law or Board policy. The dogs may sniff the air around lockers, desks, or vehicles on district property or at district-sponsored events as long as they are not allowed to sniff within the close proximity of any students.

(cf. 5131.6 - Alcohol and Other Drugs)

The above inspections shall be unannounced and may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

Students and parents/guardians shall be informed of this policy at the beginning of each school year.

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notification)

Legal Reference: (see next page)

SEARCH AND SEIZURE (continued)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

32280-32288 School safety plans

35160 Authority of governing boards

35160.1 Broad authority of school districts

49050-49051 Searches by school employees

49330-49334 Injurious objects

PENAL CODE

626.9 Firearms

626.10 Dirks, daggers, knives or razor; bringing into or possession of upon or within public school ground; exception

COURT DECISIONS

B.C. v. Plumas, (9th Cir. 1999) 192 F.3d 1260

O'Connor v. Ortega, (1987) 107 S. Ct. 1492

New Jersey v. T.L.O., (1985) 469 U.S. 325

Horton v. Goose Creek Independent School District, (5th Cir. 1982) 690 F.2d 470

Zamora v. Pomeroy, (10th Cir. 1981) 639 F.2d 662

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

83 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 257 (2001)

75 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 155 (1992)

Management Resources:

WEB SITES

California Attorney General's Office: <http://caag.state.ca.us>

CDE, Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety>