

Search and Seizure

The Board of Education is committed to maintaining an environment for students and staff which is safe and conducive to learning and working. The Board recognizes that incidents may occur where the health, safety and welfare of students and staff are jeopardized and which necessitate the search and seizure of students, their property or school property by school officials.

The Board authorizes school officials to conduct the searches stated above when there are reasonable grounds or suspicion that the search will uncover evidence that the student is violating the law or rules of the school. Reasonable suspicion shall be based on specific and objective facts that the search will produce evidence related to the alleged violation. The types of student property that may be searched by school officials include, but are not limited to, lockers, desks, purses, backpacks, student vehicles parked on district property, cellular phones, or other electronic communication devices. The Board urges that discretion, good judgment and common sense be exercised in all cases of search and seizure.

Any search of a student, his/her property, or district property under his/her control shall be limited in scope and designed to produce evidence related to the alleged violation. Factors to be considered by school officials when determining the scope of the search shall include the danger to the health or safety of students or staff, such as the possession of weapons, drugs, or other dangerous instruments, and whether the item(s) to be searched by school officials are reasonably related to the contraband to be found. In addition, school officials shall consider the intrusiveness of the search in light of the student's age, gender, and the nature of the alleged violation.

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 parent/guardian of the student being searched shall be notified by the school. Notification shall take place before the search is conducted if at all possible. If the nature of the incident precipitating the search is such that prior notification is not possible, the parent/guardian shall be notified as soon after the search as possible.

The student shall be reported and the evidence turned over to the proper legal authorities when the search uncovers illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials.

Board Policy 5145.12(b)

The Superintendent is directed to develop regulations pertaining to student search and seizure which include provisions for the protection of a student's privacy and his/her civil rights.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

32280-32289 School safety plans

35160 Authority of governing boards

35160.1 Broad authority of school districts

48900-48927 Suspension and expulsion

49050-49051 Searches by school employees

49330-49334 Injurious objects

PENAL CODE

626.9 Firearms

626.10 Dirks, daggers, knives or razor

CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION

Article I, Section 28(c) Right to Safe Schools

COURT DECISIONS

Redding v. Safford Unified School District, (9th Cir. 2008) 531 F.3d 1071

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

Jennings v. Joshua Independent School District, (5th Cir. 1989) 877 F.2d 313

O'Connor v. Ortega, (1987) 480 U.S. 709

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)

Policy

HUMBOLDT COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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