

Student Interviews, Interrogations, Searches and Arrests

The Board of Education seeks to maintain a climate in the schools which is conducive to learning and protective of the safety and welfare of staff and students. To achieve this goal, it may be necessary for school personnel to search the person and/or the personal property of the student and to seize any property deemed injurious or detrimental to the safety and welfare of students and staff.

Interviews by school administrators

When a violation of Board policy or school rules occurs, the principal or designee may question potential student victims and witnesses without prior consent of the student's parent/guardian. If a school official is investigating a report of child abuse and the suspected perpetrator is a member of the student's family, no contact with the student's family will be made.

In situations where a student is suspected of violating Board policies or school rules, the principal or designee may interview the suspected student if the school official has reasonable grounds to suspect that such a violation has occurred. The nature and extent of the questioning must be reasonably related to the objectives of the questioning. If the student denies any involvement or culpability, the student will have the opportunity to present his or her side of the story, orally or in writing.

Searches conducted by school personnel

School personnel may search a student and/or the student's personal property while on school premises or during a school activity in accordance with this policy and may seize any illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials.

Whenever possible, the student shall be informed of the reason(s) for conducting the search and the student's permission to perform the search shall be requested. A student's failure to cooperate with school officials conducting a search shall be considered grounds for disciplinary action.

An administrative report shall be prepared by the school official conducting a search explaining the reasons for the search, the results and the names of any witnesses to the search.

Search of school property

School lockers, desks and other storage areas are school property and remain at all times under the control of the school. All such lockers, desks and other storage areas, as well as their contents, are subject to inspection at any time, with or without notice.

Students shall assume full responsibility for the security of their lockers and/or other storage areas in the manner approved by the administration. Students shall be responsible for whatever is contained in desks and lockers assigned to them by the school, as well as for any loss or damage relating to the contents of such desks and lockers.

Search of the student's person or personal effects

The principal or designee may search the person of a student or a student's personal effects such as a purse, backpack, book bag, or briefcase on school property or at school-sponsored events or activities if the school official has reasonable grounds to suspect that the search will uncover:

- a. Evidence of a violation of Board and/or district policies, school rules, or federal, state, or local laws.
- b. Anything which, because of its presence, presents an immediate danger of physical harm or illness to any person.

Search of the person shall be limited to the student's pockets, any object in the student's possession such as a purse, backpack, book bag, or briefcase, and a "pat down" of the exterior of the student's clothing. An administrative report would be required if a "pat down" is ever done outside police presence.

The extent of the search of a student's person or personal effects, as well as the means to conduct the search, must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and the nature of the suspected violation. Additionally, school officials conducting the search shall be respectful of privacy considerations, in light of the sex and age of the student.

Searches of the person shall be conducted out of the presence of other students and as privately as possible by a person of the same sex as the student being searched. At least one person of the same sex as the student being searched shall witness but not participate in the search.

Searches of a student's person and/or personal effects may be conducted without the prior consent of the student's parent/guardian. However, the parent/guardian of any student searched shall be notified of the search as soon as reasonably possible.

Searches of the person which may require removal of clothing other than a coat or jacket shall be referred to a law enforcement officer. School personnel shall not participate in such searches.

Seizure of items

Anything found in the course of a search conducted by school officials which is evidence of a violation of law or Board policy or school rules or which by its presence presents an immediate danger of physical harm may be:

1. Seized and offered as evidence in any suspension or expulsion proceeding. Such material shall be kept in a secure place by the principal until it is presented at the hearing.
2. Returned to the student or the parent/guardian.
3. Turned over to a law enforcement officer in accordance with this policy.

Law enforcement officers' involvement

Interrogations and interviews

When law enforcement officials request permission to question students when students are in school or participating in school activities, the principal or designee shall ascertain that the law enforcement officer has proper identification. Except when law enforcement officers have a warrant or other court order, or when an emergency or other exigent circumstances exist, such interrogations and interviews are discouraged during students' class time.

The principal or designee shall be present during the law enforcement interrogation or interview unless a court order provides otherwise. It is the responsibility of the law enforcement officer interviewing student witnesses or interrogating student suspects to assure compliance with all applicable procedural safeguards.

Upon request by law enforcement to interview a student witness or interrogate a student suspect, school officials shall notify the student's parent/guardian, except in cases involving investigation of reported child abuse where the suspected perpetrator is a member of the student's family, when law enforcement has a court order directing that the student's parent/guardian not be notified, or when an emergency or other exigent circumstances exist.

If the student is under 18, the student's parent/guardian also shall be present during the law enforcement interrogation or interview unless: (1) the juvenile is emancipated as that term is defined in state law; (2) the student's parent/guardian has not been notified pursuant to this policy; or (3) the student's parent/guardian agrees to the interrogation or interview without being present.

Search and seizure

The principal or designee may request a search on school premises be conducted by a law enforcement officer. When law enforcement officers respond to such a request, no school employee shall assist or otherwise participate in the search. It is expected that searches by law enforcement will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of applicable law.

Custody and/or arrest

Students will be released to law enforcement officers if the student has been placed under arrest or if the student's parent/guardian and the student consent to such release. When a student is removed from school by law enforcement officers for any reason, school officials will make reasonable efforts to notify the student's parent/guardian.

It is expected that all procedural safeguards prescribed by law are followed by law enforcement officers conducting student arrests. However, district staff is not responsible for an officer's legal compliance when arresting a student.

Adopted: prior to March 25, 2014
Revised: March 25, 2014

Revised and recoded by the Board: July 17, 2019

LEGAL REF.: C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (2)(a)(I)(I) (*policy required as part of safe schools plan*)

CROSS REFS.:

Board policies:

EL-4, Communication and Council to the Board
EL-9, Treatment of Students Parents and Community
EL-10, Student Conduct, Discipline and Attendance

Administrative policies:

JIHB, Parking Lot Searches
JK, Student Discipline, and subcodes

File: J-30 (JIH)

Weld County School District Re-3J, Hudson, Colorado

Canine Searches and Drug Detection Sweeps

The district finds that there are certain circumstances in which canine searches are appropriate and legally permissible under state and federal law. One of these is when school personnel have a reasonable individualized suspicion that a particular student has contraband on school premises, whether on his/her person, in his/her personal belongings or in his/her locker or vehicle.

There are certain circumstances in which canine drug detection sweeps are permissible under state and federal law without individualized suspicion and are not considered to be "searches" as defined in law. Accordingly, the use of dogs to sniff students' backpacks, purses, coats and jackets, vehicles and lockers will be permitted in district schools without individualized suspicion, provided that the administration determines that such measures are reasonable under all of the circumstances present and the sniff detection sweeps are carried out in accordance with this policy and in a manner that is consistent with other district policies and procedures.

The parent or guardian of any student who is individually searched shall be notified of the search as soon as reasonably possible. In the event of a suspicion-less general drug detection sweep, parents will be notified if such action results in evidence of contraband in their child's possession or other violation of the student discipline code on the part of their child.

The use of drug-sniffing dogs for drug detection sweeps shall be done in accordance with the following rules and procedures:

1. All canine drug detection sweeps will be conducted under the guidance of law enforcement personnel and with the participation of a qualified canine handler.
2. A sweep using trained drug-sniffing dogs shall occur at unannounced times upon express authorization by the building administration.
3. The principal or designee shall remain present on the building premises at all times while a canine drug detection sweep is in progress.
4. Such a sweep may occur on and of any school property, including but not necessarily limited to lockers, parking lots and classrooms.
5. Students may be ordered to drop loose personal belongings (e.g., backpacks, purses, jackets) and to step away and leave the same unattended so that the dogs may sniff the belongings without sniffing the student's person.
6. Absent independently established individualized suspicion, a contraband-sniffing dog will not be used to sniff any student's person directly and will not be allowed to come into direct contact with students.
7. An "alert" by one of the dogs, subject to the judgment and expertise of the dog's handler, will be considered grounds for reasonable suspicion of the presence of

an illegal substance and the school and/or law enforcement officials will proceed with a search in an appropriate manner. Appropriate action will be taken following district policy and procedure as determined by the result of such search.

Each school in the district shall give written notice annually concerning the contents of this policy. Such notice will, at a minimum, include the information that canine drug detection sweeps will be permitted and may occur at any time, without individualized suspicion, without prior notice and may include the following: (i) lockers, (ii) classrooms, (iii) unattended personal belongings (e.g., backpacks, purses, jackets), and (iv) vehicles parked on school property.

Approved: February 27, 2013

Revised and recoded by the superintendent: July 17, 2019

CROSS REFS.:

Board policies:

EL-4, Communication and Council to the Board

EL-9, Treatment of Students Parents and Community

EL-10, Student Conduct, Discipline and Attendance

Administrative policies:

JIH, Student Interviews, Interrogations, Searches and Arrests

JIHB, Parking Lot Searches

JK, Student Discipline, and subcodes