

800.8(7) Procedures

Policy 800.8: Student Searches

800.8(7.1) Search Procedures

- 7.1.1 Principals or vice-principals shall normally conduct student searches or must otherwise approve all searches by other school staff members.
- 7.1.2 Random searches of lockers, desks, student personal belongings or persons are not permitted.
- 7.1.3 All student searches conducted by a school staff member shall be conducted in the presence of a second adult.
- 7.1.4 Every attempt should be made to have the student present when a locker, a desk or personal items are searched. However, in emergencies or when students are absent it is recognized that this may not be possible. When the student is present, the purpose of the search should be clearly stated to the student.
- 7.1.5 The search should be conducted in a sensitive manner, be minimally intrusive and be respectful of the privacy of the student.
- 7.1.6 Once the search is completed, parents/guardians of the individual student(s) shall be notified that a search has taken place.
- 7.1.7 All student searches shall be documented, including persons conducting the search, purpose of the search, date, time and results.

800.8(7.2) Physical Searches

Before a physical search of a student can be conducted, the principal or vice-principal must have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is concealing illegal or prohibited substances or objects on his/her person.

- 7.2.1 A student shall first be requested to display the contents of his/her personal effects (e.g. book bag, pockets, purse) for visual inspection.
- 7.2.2 Physical searches of students shall not normally be conducted by a principal or other school staff person.
- 7.2.3 Where it is determined that a physical search of a student or student(s) may be required, the principal shall seek the assistance of the police. (See Section 7.4)

800.8(7.3) Locker Searches

- 7.3.1 Students and parents/guardians should be advised annually in writing that lockers are the property of the school district and, as such, are subject to search.
- 7.3.2 Only approved locks shall be permitted to be used on school lockers.
- 7.3.3 Locker use may be terminated where a student does not comply with the conditions of use as set by the school.
- 7.3.4 Locker searches may be conducted without notice where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has concealed something in his/her locker that violates school rules and/or places the safety of students and staff at risk.
- 7.3.5 Locker searches should be conducted when there is minimal impact on the general student population (e.g. when most students are in class; outside of regular school hours).

800.8(7.4) Police Involvement in Searches

- 7.4.1 Student lockers and/or personal property on school premises may be subject to search by police officers upon the presentation to school authorities of a proper search warrant.
- 7.4.2 Random searches without proper search warrants, including random searches by police canine units, are not permitted.
- 7.4.3 At the discretion of the principal or vice-principal the police may be requested to conduct a student search. This should occur when the principal or vice-principal has reasonable suspicion that a student may be concealing prohibited objects or substances, and where a search by school authorities may pose a risk to their health and safety and that of others in the building.
- 7.4.4 Where police officers are requested to conduct a student search, the principal or vice-principal should be present.
- 7.4.5 Police searches should be conducted, where possible, when there is a minimal impact on the general student population.
- 7.4.6 In the event that a police canine unit is deployed at a school, the area in which the dog is present should be restricted and students kept separated from the search area. Only school authorities associated with the search should be in the area when the dog(s) are present.

800.8(7.5) Seizure

- 7.5.1 Items used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process may be confiscated by school authorities during a student search.

- 7.5.2 Items prohibited by the school or other items or substances reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety and security of students and staff, including the student who is the subject of the search, may be confiscated by school authorities.
- 7.5.3 Items determined to have been stolen may be confiscated and returned to the rightful owners or given to the proper authorities at the discretion of the principal or vice-principal.
- 7.5.4 Illegal items or substances, or any other items or substances which may be evidence of a serious crime, shall be turned over to the police.
- 7.5.5 Generally, items or substances considered to be of a dangerous nature should be turned over to the police. However, school administrators may use discretion when it is clear that an object was not brought to school for harmful purposes (e.g. knife). In these cases, the item should be confiscated and the parent notified that the object may be picked up from the school.
- 7.5.6 Items confiscated during a student search by school authorities:
 - a) Should be documented.
 - b) May be used as evidence for disciplinary procedures.
 - c) May be used as evidence in criminal proceedings.

800.8(7.6) Search and Seizure on School Buses

- 7.6.1 Any item reasonably determined by the bus driver to be an immediate threat to the safety and security of students and staff may be confiscated by the driver and turned over to the school administrator.
- 7.6.2 Where a bus driver has reasonable suspicion that a student is concealing illegal or prohibited substances, s/he shall advise the school administrator at the earliest opportunity.