

**SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

The Governing Board is fully committed to promoting a safe learning environment and, to the extent possible, eliminating the possession and use of weapons, illegal drugs, and other controlled substances by students on school premises and at school activities. As necessary to protect the health 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, or otherwise prohibited items.

*(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)*

*(cf. 3515 - Campus Security)*

*(cf. 3515.3 - District Police/Security Department)*

*(cf. 5131 - Conduct)*

*(cf. 5131.7 - Weapons and Dangerous Instruments)*

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

The Board urges that employees exercise discretion and good judgment. When conducting a search or seizure, employees shall act in accordance with law, Board policy, and administrative regulation.

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

*(cf. 1312.1 - Complaints Concerning District Employees)*

*(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)*

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that staff who conduct student searches receive training regarding the requirements of the district's policy and administrative regulation and other legal issues, as appropriate.

*(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)*

*(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)*

*(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)*

**Individual Searches**

School officials may search any individual student, his/her property, or district property under his/her control when there is a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence that he/she is violating the law, Board policy, administrative regulation, or other rules of the district or 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.

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

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE (continued)**

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 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 by Law Enforcement)*

### **Searches of Multiple Student Lockers/Desks**

All student lockers and desks are the property of the district. 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.

### **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 use metal detectors at district schools as necessary to help provide a safe learning environment. He/she shall establish a plan to ensure that metal detector searches are conducted in a uniform and consistent manner.

### **Use of Contraband Detection Dogs**

In an effort to keep the schools free of dangerous contraband, 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.

## SEARCH AND SEIZURE (continued)

The dogs may sniff the air around lockers, desks, or vehicles on district property or at district-sponsored events. Dogs shall not sniff within the close proximity of students or other persons and may not sniff any personal items on those persons without their consent.

### *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*, 557 U.S. 364 (2009)

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

*Jennings v. Joshua Independent School District*, 557 U.S. 364 (2009)

*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)

### *Management Resources:*

#### NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE PUBLICATIONS

*The Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies in U.S. Schools: A Guide for Schools and Law Enforcement Agencies*, 1999

#### WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

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

California Department of Education, Safe Schools: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss>

National Institute of Justice: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

Policy

adopted: February 23, 1999

revised: August 22, 2000

revised: October 23, 2018

**VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Visalia, California

**SEARCH AND SEIZURE****Use of Metal Detectors**

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the following safeguards are used when making metal detector scans:

1. Before walk-through, students shall be asked to empty their pockets and belongings of metallic objects.
2. If an initial metal detector activation occurs, students shall be asked to remove other metallic objects that they may be wearing (e.g., belt and jewelry) and to walk through a second time.
3. If a second activation occurs, a hand-held metal detector shall be used.
4. If the activation is not eliminated or explained, staff shall escort the student to a private area where an expanded search shall be conducted by a staff member of the same gender as the student in the presence of another district employee.
5. The search shall be limited to the detection of the cause of the activation.

**Use of Contraband Detection Dogs**

Contraband detection dogs shall not be used in classrooms or other district facilities when the rooms are occupied, except for demonstration purposes with the handler present. When used for demonstration purposes, the dog shall be separated from the students and not allowed to sniff any individual.

Prior to conducting an inspection, students shall be asked to leave the room that will be subject to the canine sniff. No student shall be forced to leave personal items behind for inspection, unless school officials have reasonable suspicion to search the item.

Only the dog's official handler shall determine what constitutes an alert by the dog. If the dog alerts on a particular item or place, the student having the use of that item or place, or responsibility for it, shall be called to witness the inspection. If a dog alerts on a locked vehicle, the student who brought the vehicle onto district property shall be asked to unlock it for inspection.

*(cf. 5131.6 - Alcohol and Other Drugs)*

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

**Notifications**

At the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment, the Superintendent or designee shall inform students and parents/guardians about the district's policies and procedures for searches, including notice regarding:

**SEARCH AND SEIZURE** (continued)

1. The possibility of random searches of students, their belongings, their vehicles parked on district property, and district properties under a student's control, including lockers or desks
2. The district's contraband dog detection program
3. The use of metal detector scans

In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that signs are posted at all schools at which metal detectors are to be used to explain that anyone may be scanned by metal detector for guns, knives, or other illegal weapons when on campus or attending athletic or extracurricular events.

Regulation  
approved: February 23, 1999  
revised: August 22, 2000  
revised: September 24, 2018

**VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Visalia, California