

STUDENT SEARCHES

SEARCH OF BUILDINGS, DESKS, AND LOCKERS

The Morehouse Parish School Board is the exclusive owner of any public school building and any desk or locker utilized by any student therein or any other area that may be set aside for the personal use of the students. Any teacher, principal, administrator, or school security guard employed by the School Board may search either physically or with the use of metal detectors any public school building, desk, locker, area or grounds of said public school for evidence that a law, School Board policy, or school rule has been violated. Students shall have no expectation of privacy in use of the lockers which have been assigned to them, and the acceptance and use of locker facilities by students shall constitute consent by them to the search of such locker facilities at any time by authorized school personnel.

SEARCH OF STUDENTS AND/OR THEIR PERSONNEL EFFECTS

Any teacher, principal, administrator, or school security guard may search the person of a student or his/her personal effects when, based on the attendant circumstances at the time of the search, there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated a law, a school rule, or a School Board policy. Such search shall be conducted in a manner that is reasonably related to the purposes of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age or sex of the student and the nature of the suspected offense. Random searches with a metal detector of students and/or their personal effects may be conducted at any time, provided they are conducted without deliberate touching of the students. Strip searches of students are specifically prohibited.

SEARCH OF VEHICLES

The School Board shall require students who bring vehicles on campus to register those vehicles and to provide school authorities with a *consent to search* of such vehicle signed by the student, parents and/or owner of the vehicle. Any vehicle parked on School Board property may be searched without consent at any time by a school administrator/designee when such school administrator/designee has articulable facts which lead the school administrator/designee to a reasonable belief that weapons, dangerous substances or elements, illegal drugs, alcohol, stolen goods, or other materials or objects the possession of which is a violation of law, School Board policy or school regulations will be found. Searches of vehicles may also be conducted to assure compliance with health, safety, and/or security laws, rules, or regulations. Such searches shall be conducted in the presence of the students whenever possible.

If the vehicle is locked, the student shall unlock the vehicle upon request by school administrator/designee. If the student refuses to unlock the vehicle, proper law enforcement officials shall be summoned and the student shall be subject to disciplinary

action for such refusal. Any student not present during a vehicular search shall be informed of the search as soon as practicable thereafter.

USE OF CANINES

School administrators shall be authorized to utilize canines, whose reliability and accuracy for sniffing out controlled substances, drugs, alcohol, guns, knives, weapons, or other materials or objects which are a violation of School Board policy have been established, to aid in the search for contraband in school-owned property and vehicles parked on school property. Canines shall not be used to search students unless school officials have established independently that there is reasonable belief that the student possesses such items on his/her person. The canines shall be accompanied by a qualified and authorized trainer who shall be responsible for the dog's actions. An indication by the dog that drugs, alcohol, weapons, or any other item of violation is present on school property or in a vehicle shall be reasonable cause for further search by school officials.

CONFISCATION

If, during any search, school personnel discover and confiscate any firearm, bomb, knife, or other implement which could be used as a weapon, or any controlled dangerous substance, the principal or designee shall report the confiscation to the proper law enforcement officials. Any implement or material confiscated shall be retained, cataloged, and secured by the principal or designee so as to prevent the destruction, alteration, or disappearance of it until such time as the implement or material can be given to law enforcement personnel. Any principal or designee failing to report any prohibited weapon or confiscated material or implement to the proper law enforcement officials or failing to properly secure any weapon or confiscated material or implement shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action as may be determined by the Superintendent and/or School Board.

All items confiscated by a teacher, principal or other administrator shall be retained and secured by the school principal or his designee and if the appropriate law enforcement authorities do not take custody of the item or, if custody is taken and then returned to the school principal, the school principal shall deliver the item to the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance who shall retain the item for one (1) calendar year after which time it shall be destroyed (all electronic devices are exempt) unless it is subject to an ongoing court or administrative proceeding and in such an event the item shall be retained until such time as the administrative or court proceeding is finally terminated at which time the item will be destroyed. Notwithstanding any other provision contained in this policy, in the event the item is stolen property, it may be returned to its rightful owner following the expiration of one (1) year or the termination of the administrative or court proceeding, whichever is longer.

Any school employee who fails to report the confiscation of such an item or who fails to

retain and secure such an item shall be subject to disciplinary action by the Morehouse Parish School Board for violation of this policy.

NOTIFICATION OF AUTHORITY TO SEARCH

Students and parents shall be notified at the beginning of each school year of the School Board's authority to conduct unannounced searches of students, lockers, automobiles, school employees, and any other person or object on School Board property and at school sponsored events. Signs of high visibility informing the general public of the School Board's search authority shall be posted at entrances to all School Board buildings.

RECORDS OF SEARCHES

Whenever any search of a student, his/her personal effects, or his/her vehicle is conducted pursuant to this policy, the school administrator/designee conducting the search shall prepare a written report of it as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable. Such record shall include the name of the student, the name(s) of the person(s) conducting the search, the circumstances leading to the search, and the results of the search. This written, dated, and signed record shall be filed and maintained in the school administrator's office, and a copy of it shall be sent to the Superintendent within five (5) days. The student(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be given a written receipt for any item(s) seized and/or impounded by the school administrator/designee as a result of the search.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS

Any student found to be in possession of any item in violation of a law, a school rule, or a School Board policy shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with School Board policy and school rules. Investigative facts and/or seized items resulting from searches shall be immediately turned over to the proper law enforcement officials.

DEFENSE AND INDEMNIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES

If any teacher, principal, administrator, or school security guard employed by the School Board is sued for damages by a student or person qualified to bring suit on behalf of the student based on a school search, the School Board shall provide the employee with a defense to the suit and shall indemnify the employee against any judgment rendered against him/her provided that the employee has acted in accordance with the provisions of this policy. The School Board shall not indemnify any employee against a judgment if there is a specific finding therein that the action of the employee was maliciously, willfully, and deliberately intended to harass, embarrass, or intimidate the student.

STUDENT EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY

Nothing contained in this policy shall be construed to afford a student an expectation of

privacy which would not otherwise exist.

Revised: March, 2025
Approved: June 3, 2025

Ref: US Constitution, Amend. IV; US Constitution, Amend. XIV, Sec. 1; La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§17:416, 17:416.3; State v. Stein, 203 Kan. 638 456 P.2d (1969); New Jersey v. T.L.O., 469 U.S. 325, 105 S. Ct. 733; Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators, Bulletin 741, Louisiana Department of Education; Board minutes, 12-7-83, 6-3-25.