

WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: Canine Searches 6850

ADOPTED:

REVISED:

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| 1. Purpose | <p>School administrators have a compelling interest in ensuring that controlled substances are not present on school grounds and preventing drug-related activity on school grounds. In order to reinforce this purpose, generalized and random locker, vehicle and bag searches, including but not limited to backpacks, gym bags, draw string bags, (not physically on a student's person), to include canine sniff searches, are authorized and may be made without notice and require no individualized suspicion. If a drug sniffing dog reacts to the purported presence of an illegal substance, such reaction shall constitute reasonable individualized suspicion so as to permit a search of the individual's locker, vehicle or bag.</p> |
| 2. Authority | <p>The Board authorizes the North Fayette Police Department, other municipalities assisting the NFPD, and private firms to assist the district by providing the services of their canine officer.</p> |
| 3. Delegation of Responsibility | <p>A search of school property shall be conducted at any time to further the District's compelling interest in ensuring that controlled substances are not present on school grounds and preventing drug-related activity on school grounds.</p> <p>In order to reinforce the within purpose, generalized and random locker, vehicle and bag searches, including but not limited to backpacks, gym bags, draw string bags, (not physically on a student's person), to include canine sniff searches, are authorized and may be made without notice and require no individualized suspicion. If a drug sniffing dog reacts to the purported presence of an illegal substance, such reaction shall constitute reasonable individualized suspicion so as to permit a search of the individual's locker, vehicle or bag. Drug sniffing dogs will not be used to search a student's individual person. No bag search shall occur while the bag is physically on a student's individual person.</p> <p>All student handbooks shall include language explaining the use of canine searches on occasion throughout each school year. The administration shall annually evaluate the effectiveness of canine searches in the school and report such to the Board.</p> |

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| <p>4. Guidelines</p> | <p>Dogs used for canine searches in the schools by the police shall be appropriately trained and certified.</p> <p>Use of canine searches at least once per semester is deemed adequate. However, the district may choose to conduct canine searches whenever it deems necessary further its compelling interest in ensuring that controlled substances are not present on school grounds and preventing drug-related activity on school grounds.</p> <p><u>Procedure</u></p> <p>The attending officer shall accompany the dog to the school. While the dog works, building principals and/or administrators shall temporarily close the area containing lockers, bags, or vehicles to be searched.</p> <p>The following procedure will be used if the dog alerts to a locker, bag, or vehicle:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The locker number, backpack or vehicle will be noted. Adjacent lockers, bags, and vehicles will also be noted when necessary. A second dog may be used to verify any initial locker alert.2. After a canine officer and handler have completed the search, the building principals will conduct searches of the lockers. The building principal shall notify the student that his/her locker, bag or vehicle is going to be searched and invite him/her to be present. The administration shall conduct the search. However, when school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that a locker contains materials which pose a threat to the health, welfare, or safety of the school population, student lockers may be searched without prior warning. When a canine search indicates reasonable suspicion of a crime or violation of school rules, the canine officer shall remain at the scene with administrators or the proper authorities will be contacted if a private firm is used.3. If drug paraphernalia or controlled substances or those items thought to be controlled substances, are found, the parent/guardian shall be contacted immediately and requested to come to the school. An investigation shall be conducted by the building principal according to Board policy and school procedures.4. If no drugs are found, the student will return to class. The building principal shall contact the student's parents/guardians before the end of the school day to explain the procedure that has occurred. Where possible, the student will be invited to be present with the principal when the telephone call is made.5. The Superintendent shall notify the Board in a timely fashion. |
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