

STUDENTS

Searches of Students and Their Property

A student and their property is subject to search by a principal or a principal's designee if reasonable grounds exist to suspect that evidence of a violation of the law or school rules will be uncovered. School staff will report a student's suspicious activity to the principal prior to initiating a search, except in emergency situations. A search is required when there are reasonable grounds to suspect a student has a firearm on school grounds, transportation, or at school events.

Establishing Reasonable Suspicion

A search may occur if the principal or a principal's designee has reasonable suspicion that the search will produce evidence of unlawful activity or a violation of a school rule. To determine whether reasonable suspicion exists, consider the following:

Identify:

1. What information is the suspicion based on?
2. Is the information reliable?
3. Is the person who shared the information credible?
4. If a search were conducted what's the likelihood that evidence of unlawful activity or a violation of a school rule would be found?

Conducting the search

If the principal, or his or her designee, determines that reasonable suspicion exists to search a student's clothing, personal effects, desk, locker, assigned storage area, or automobile, the search shall be conducted as follows:

- A. If evidence of unlawful activity of a violation of a school rule is suspected proceed to search by asking the student to remove all items from pockets, purses, handbags, backpacks, gym bags, etc.
- B. If the student refuses to cooperate in a personal search, the student should be held until the student's parent or guardian is available to consent to the search. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached in a reasonable time, the principal may conduct the search without the student's consent.
- C. The search must not be excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and nature of the suspected infraction
- D. Do not conduct a strip search or body cavity search of the student.

Locker Searches

Lockers, desks, and storage areas are the property of the school district. Accordingly, students have no expectation of privacy in the lockers, desks, and storage areas they use or are assigned.

Because students have no expectation of privacy in their lockers, desks, and storage areas, principals or principals' designees may search all student lockers, desks, or storage areas at any time without prior notice and without reasonable suspicion that the search will yield evidence of any particular student's violation of the law or school rule.

Date: 4/26/82; 11/17/88; 7/26/99; 10/28/02; 5/23/05; 4/20/23

PORT TOWNSEND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 50