

POLICY NUMBER:

**USE OF SPECIALLY TRAINED ANIMALS IN A SEARCH FOR ILLEGALLY POSSESSED SUBSTANCES OR OBJECTS ON SCHOOL BOARD PROPERTY**

THE SCHOOL BOARD SEEKS TO MAINTAIN A CLIMATE CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING AND TO PROTECT THE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF ITS STUDENTS AND STAFF. TO ENSURE THIS CLIMATE, THE SCHOOL BOARD MAY INVITE THE USE OF SPECIALLY TRAINED ANIMALS UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT TO ASSIST IN A SEARCH FOR ILLEGALLY POSSESSED ITEMS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO AMMUNITION/BOMB MATERIALS AND DRUGS ON SCHOOL BOARD PROPERTY. THIS POLICY IS NOT APPLICABLE IN AN EMERGENT SITUATION.

**I. Requirements for Specially Trained Animals**

- A. Specially trained animals, non-aggressive, non-attack dogs and their law enforcement handlers must be invited onto school campuses by a school administrator prior to any search;
- B. Documentation of the specially trained animal's training or certification to search for a single purpose must be provided prior to any search;
- C. While on school property, specially trained animals must be under the control of their handlers at all times;
- D. Specially trained animals may be on school property solely for the purpose of assisting in the search for illegally possessed substances or objects.
- E. Specially trained animal's role shall be to conduct an initial screening by sniffing. A sniff which results in a trained and controlled response from the animal around the object or the handler is an "alert."

**II. Process for Search for Illegally Possessed Substances and Objects**

- A. The use of specially trained animals to sniff for illegally possessed substances or objects may occur on any School Board property and includes buses used for out-of-county and/or overnight field trips;
- B. Specially trained animals may sniff for illegally possessed substances and objects in vacant classrooms, bathrooms and other areas where students congregate. Students may be asked to leave personal items in the area to be screened;
- C. A school administrator shall accompany the law enforcement officer during the sniffing process;
- D. Specially trained animals shall not sniff students individually or items on students' persons without consent;
- E. Upon an alert by the specially trained animal in front of, for example, a particular student's desk or belongings, that student's name will be documented by the school administrator;

- F. Any student whose desk or property receives an alert will be escorted to an office or to a location away from other students for follow up questions and possible search.

**III. Search for Illegally Possessed Substances or Objects**

- A. A law enforcement officer is responsible for conducting any subsequent search, if warranted, of the student's belongings and for confiscating any illegally possessed substances or objects.
- B. All confiscated illegally possessed substances or objects shall be turned over to law enforcement or SIU;
- C. School administrators shall make every effort to contact the student's parents prior to any questioning. Any questioning by a law enforcement official of a student concerning a search yielding illegally possessed substances or objects shall be conducted in the presence of a school administrator;
- D. The school administrator shall take appropriate disciplinary action regarding the student;
- E. If a student refuses to be searched, the student may be subject to arrest and/or discipline.

**IV. When the Search Yields Items Prohibited by School Board Policy**

- A. When there is a search conducted and that search yields no illegally possessed substances or objects but does yield a finding of prohibited School Board items, those items shall be confiscated by the school administrator;
- B. The school administrator will confer with the student, notify his/her parents/guardians about the prohibited item;
- C. The school administrator shall take appropriate disciplinary action;
- D. Nothing in this policy supersedes any language contained in Policy 5006.

**V. Notice**

- A. In each K-12 school, in places readily seen by students, including each single point of entry and other locations where students may frequent, notices must be posted that a student's locker or other storage area is subject to search, upon reasonable suspicion, for prohibited or illegally possessed substances or objects.
- B. Notice shall include that a search for illegally possessed substances or objects does not prohibit the use of specially trained animals.

Policy Custodian: Office of Safe Schools

Authority: F.S. §1001.41, F.S. §1001.42, F.S. §1006.09(9)

*New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, 46 U.S. 991 (1983) - A search by a school official is “legal” if it is reasonable under all the circumstances.

History: Adopted [DATE]