

**Official School Board Policy #3590**  
**of the**  
**North Allegheny School District**

**SEARCHES OF STUDENTS,  
STUDENT LOCKERS  
AND STUDENT VEHICLES**

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Students are entitled to the guarantees of the Fourth Amendment and they are subject to reasonable searches and seizures by school officials.
- 1.2 The elimination of drugs, alcohol and weapons in public schools is important for the welfare and safety of students. This importance has been recognized by state and federal laws, including the Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986, 20 U.S.C. §3171.2 et seq.; Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, 41 U.S.C. §201 et seq.; Pennsylvania Act 93 of 1989, 35 P.S. §807.1; Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, 20 U.S. C. §8921 et seq.; and Pennsylvania Act 26 of 1995, 24 P.S. §1501-A and 24 P.S. §1317.2.

**2.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- 2.1 For purposes of this policy, “contraband” includes drugs, alcohol, weapons, or other materials possessed by a student in violation of federal or state law or school policy.
- 2.2 All contraband found during searches by school officials will be seized and used as evidence against the student in disciplinary proceedings. In addition, illegal material confiscated will be turned over immediately to the appropriate law enforcement agency for further investigation and for the institution of possible juvenile or criminal proceedings.

**3.0 STUDENTS**

- 3.1 School officials may conduct a reasonable search of a particular student and his or her personal effects when there is reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of contraband.
- 3.2 The scope of the search must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the student’s age and sex and the nature of contraband the student is suspected of possessing.

**4.0 LOCKERS**

- 4.1 Student lockers are owned by the North Allegheny School District and loaned to students for their convenience. The school exercises exclusive control over lockers and a student should not expect privacy regarding items placed in a locker because lockers are subject to search at any time by school officials.

- 4.2 School officials may conduct a reasonable search of a particular locker when there is reasonable suspicion that the locker contains contraband. Prior to the search of a particular locker, the student assigned to the locker will be notified and given an opportunity to be present. However, where school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that a particular locker contains material which poses a threat to the welfare and safety of students and staff in the school, the student locker may be searched without prior notice.
- 4.3 School officials may conduct blanket or random searches of lockers without suspicion of any particular student where school officials determine in good faith that a substantial problem is threatening the welfare or safety of students and staff and that blanket or random searches may help solve or eliminate the problem. Before such a search is conducted, the school will take the following steps:
- 4.3.1 The Superintendent or his/her designee and the principal will jointly approve the search in the interest of solving a substantial problem threatening the welfare or safety of students and staff.
- 4.3.2 The Superintendent or his/her designee and the principal will decide the method and scope of the search. The search method must be uniform and preclude the use of discretion by school officials as to which lockers are searched. Random searches may be used to search less than all lockers provided the method of selection is truly random and without discretion of officials; for example, searching every fifth locker in a designated hallway.
- 4.3.3 The Superintendent or his/her designee and the principal are authorized to conduct a one-time search or a program under which a series of searches are conducted over a specified period of time, provided that the search program will only continue as long as deemed necessary in light of the identified problem.
- 4.4 All students will be required to sign a written acknowledgment of receipt of a copy of this policy and/or the North Allegheny School District Code of Conduct that includes this policy at the time each student is assigned and issued a locker. No additional notice to students is required prior to a random or blanket search of students' lockers. Blanket or random locker searches may be conducted by opening and searching lockers.
- 4.5 Any contraband found in a locker will be considered in the possession of the student assigned to the locker.

## **5.0 STUDENT VEHICLES**

- 5.1 Student parking lots are owned by the North Allegheny School District and parking permits are made available to students for their convenience. The school exercises exclusive control over student parking lots. Students should not expect privacy regarding items placed in their vehicle in the student parking lot, as the parking lot is subject to routine patrols and inspections of the exterior of student vehicles on school property without prior notice or consent. Routine patrols may be conducted by school officials or through the use of drug detecting dogs.

- 5.2 School officials may conduct a reasonable search of the interior of a particular vehicle parked in the student parking lot when there is a reasonable suspicion that the vehicle contains contraband. Prior to the search of a particular vehicle, the student will be notified and given an opportunity to be present. However, where school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that a particular vehicle contains material which poses a threat to the welfare and safety of students and staff in the school, the vehicle may be searched without prior notice.
- 5.3 All students will be required to sign a written acknowledgment of receipt of a copy of this policy and/or the North Allegheny School District Code of Conduct that includes this policy at the time each student is assigned a parking permit. No additional notice to students is required prior to routine patrols and inspections of the exterior of students' vehicles on school property.

## **6.0 SEARCH PROCEDURES**

- 6.1 Except as provided below, only principals and assistant principals may conduct the search of a particular student, locker, or vehicle. The search must be conducted in the presence of at least one other administrator or teacher, except in emergency situations in which the principal or assistant principal has reasonable suspicion that a student may have contraband that poses an immediate threat to the welfare and safety of other individuals in the school.
- 6.2 A pat-down search of a student's person may only be conducted by a principal or assistant principal of the same sex, except:
  - 6.2.1 In emergency situations in which the principal or assistant principal has reasonable suspicion that a student may have contraband on his or her person that poses an immediate threat to the welfare and safety of that student or of other individuals in the school; and
  - 6.2.2 When the student's sex is different from both the principal and assistant principal, in which case the pat-down search must be conducted by another school official of the same sex.
- 6.3 School officials may use discretion in any decision to involve police in the investigation of contraband possession by students, except where school policy or state or federal laws require notification of police.