

**WINSLOW PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
25 MESSALONSKEE AVENUE  
WATERVILLE, ME 04901**

**QUESTIONING AND SEARCHES OF STUDENTS**

The School Committee seeks to maintain a safe and orderly environment in the schools. Building administrator and/or school personnel appointed by administration are authorized to question and/or search students in accordance with this policy and accompanying administrative procedures.

Students may not bring, possess or store at school any items or substances which are prohibited by law, School Committee policies and/or school rules, or which interfere with the operations, discipline or general welfare of the school.

Student use of all school storage facilities, including but not limited to lockers, desks, and parking lots, is a privilege granted by the school. All storage facilities are school property and remain under the control, custody and supervision of the school. Students have no expectation of privacy in school storage facilities or for any items placed in such storage facilities. Building administrator and/or school personnel appointed by administration have the authority to inspect and search storage facilities and their contents on a random basis, with or without reasonable suspicion, and without notice or consent.

If a search produces evidence that a student has violated or is violating the law, School Committee policies and/or school rules, such evidence may be seized and impounded by building administrator and/or school personnel appointed by administration and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken. Evidence may be forwarded to law enforcement authorities as required by law or as deemed appropriate by school administrators.

School staff, students and parents shall be informed of this policy on an annual basis through handbooks and/or other means selected by school administrators.

The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement, with input from legal counsel, administrators, staff and others as appropriate, any administrative procedures necessary to carry out this policy. Such administrative procedures shall be subject to School Committee approval.

**ADOPTED:** May 21, 2003; **REVISED:** November 5, 2007

**CROSS REFERENCE:** JIH-R – Questioning and Searches of Students - Administrative Procedure  
JICIA – Weapons, Violence and School Safety  
JK – Student Discipline  
KLG - Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

**SOURCE:** Board Policy

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**QUESTIONING AND SEARCHES OF STUDENTS  
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE**

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide guidelines for the conduct of student questioning and searches by school administrators. These are guidelines only and may be adjusted within reasonable and lawful limits on a case-by-case basis.

A. Questioning by School Administrators

1. School administrators are under no obligation to notify a student's parents/guardians prior to questioning a student regarding alleged violations of School Committee policies, school rules and/or federal/state laws. If law enforcement officers are involved, refer to policy KLG – Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities.

2. School administrators shall inform the student of the reasons for the questioning and provide an opportunity for the student to respond to any allegations. School administrators shall make a reasonable effort to question the student in a location out of the sight and hearing of other students.

3. If a student fails to cooperate, lies, misleads or threatens any person during questioning, he/she may be subject to additional disciplinary action.

B. Searches of Students and/or Personal Property in Students' Immediate Possession

1. School administrators are authorized to search students and/or personal property in the students' immediate possession when, in their judgment, there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has violated or is violating the School Committee policies, school rules and/or federal/state laws.

2. All searches of students and/or personal property shall be authorized and conducted by a school administrator in the presence of a witness, except where the circumstances render the presence of a witness impractical.
3. Searches should be reasonably related to the suspected violation and no more intrusive than necessary to discover the evidence for which the search was instigated. Sensitivity to gender issues should be considered where possible. Searches may include the student's outer clothing (e.g., pockets, jacket, shoes, hat) and personal belongings (e.g., purse, backpack, gym bag, lunch bag).
4. Searches which disclose evidence that a student has violated School Committee policies or school rules will be addressed through school disciplinary procedures. Evidence of violation of federal/state laws may result in school disciplinary action and/or be forwarded to law enforcement authorities for possible investigation/prosecution.
5. School administrators are required to document all searches and items seized/impounded on the Student Search Form or by another reasonable method.

C. Searches of Lockers, Desks and Other School Facilities

1. School staff, students and parents shall be informed of this policy/procedure on an annual basis.
2. School administrators shall consult with the Superintendent prior to conducting random searches.
3. Searches of individual student lockers, desks or other storage facilities and their contents based upon reasonable suspicion will be conducted in the presence of the student and a witness, if practical under the circumstances of the search.
4. Searches which disclose evidence that a student has violated School Committee policies or school rules will be addressed through school disciplinary procedures. Evidence of violation of federal/state laws may result in school disciplinary action and/or be forwarded to law enforcement authorities for possible investigation/prosecution.
5. School administrators are required to document all searches and items seized/impounded on the Student Search Form or by another reasonable method.

D. Patrolling of Parking Lots

1. Students may drive vehicles to school and park in designated areas in accordance with school rules. School administrators retain the authority to patrol parking lots.
2. If school administrators have a reasonable suspicion that

a vehicle which a student has parked at school contains evidence that the student has or is violating a federal/state law and/or there is a substantial threat to the welfare and safety of the schools, law enforcement authorities will be requested to render assistance in accordance with School Committee policy KLG – Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities.

E. Involvement of Law Enforcement Authorities

1. School authorities have the discretion to request the assistance of law enforcement authorities in accordance with School Committee policy.

Adopted: May 21, 2003

Revised: November 5, 2007

Cross Reference: JIH-E – Student Search Checklist  
KLG – Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities