

Student Searches

Cooperative administrators are authorized to make searches of students, students' personal property, and vehicles, as well as Cooperative-owned/provided property under the conditions outlined below.

"Cooperative-owned/provided property" includes, but is not limited to buildings, parking lots, desks, instruments, electronic devices, storage containers, storage areas, lockers, computer systems and equipment, voicemail, and vehicles. This property is intended for use for educational purposes and Cooperative business only.

Student and Student Property Searches

A student and/or a student's personal property (e.g., purse, backpack, book bag, cell phone, electronic devices, etc.) may be searched without prior consent when a Cooperative administrator has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of items that are unauthorized, illegal, or contraband; or that the search will produce evidence of the violation of a Cooperative rule; or potential harm to self or others.

Searches of a student's garments while being worn (such as jackets, socks, pockets, etc.) will be conducted in private. Two Cooperative employees, one of whom is a Cooperative administrator, must be present during the search. The employee who conducts the search must be the same gender as the student. A more intrusive search of the student's person is permissible only in emergency situations when the health and safety of students, employees, or visitors on the Cooperative premises are threatened. Such a search may only be conducted in private by a Cooperative administrator or law enforcement of the same gender, with an adult of the same gender present, unless the health or safety of students will be endangered by the delay caused by following these procedures. Administrative personnel may confiscate any items in student possession that are unauthorized, illegal, represent potential harm to self or others, or are found to be in violation of a Cooperative rule.

The Cooperative may implement rules requiring students in specified programs to forfeit personal cell phones during class times. A staff member may also take possession of a student's personal cell phone or other personal electronic device brought onto Cooperative property when the student is observed using the device in a manner contrary to Cooperative rules. The electronic device will be delivered to administration. An administrator may take possession and conduct a search of a student's device brought onto Cooperative property if during the course of an investigation of a student discipline violation, the administration has reasonable suspicion that the electronic device may produce evidence related to the discipline violation or there is reasonable suspicion of a safety threat to self or others. In an emergency, an administrator may take possession of and hold the device without the student's knowledge. If the student is arrested, the electronic device shall be turned over to law enforcement.

If a search, other than a routine, school-wide screening, has been conducted, the administration will inform the parent/guardian via written (email, text, etc.) or verbal communication by the end of the day. If circumstances do not allow for notification on the same day, a letter will be sent.

Student property may also be screened for the presence of weapons or prohibited items (e.g., drugs) by administration or law enforcement using appropriate detection devices and may be screened in

conjunction with law enforcement by using animals trained to locate and/or detect weapons and prohibited items.

Searches of Student Property at Events

Student property, including, but not limited to, backpacks, book bags, athletic bags, instrument cases, and purses may be searched for weapons, drugs, contraband, or prohibited items, as a condition of admittance to or participation in any Cooperative-sponsored public event such as athletic contests, graduation ceremonies, or other Cooperative programs.

Searches of Cooperative-Owned/Provided Property

Cooperative-owned/provided property is temporarily assigned to individual students but remains the property of Cooperative at all times. Students have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality when using Cooperative-owned/provided property.

However, students are expected to assume full responsibility for the security of Cooperative-owned/provided property. Students are not to share Cooperative-owned/provided property unless assigned by the administration (e.g., students should not share private locker combinations with other students).

Maintenance Searches – The administration has a reasonable and valid interest in ensuring that Cooperative owned/provided property is properly maintained. For this reason, periodic inspection of Cooperative owned/provided property is permissible to check for cleanliness and vandalism. General maintenance inspections may be conducted by Cooperative staff if instructed by the principal, or other appropriate administrator, at any time without notice, without the student's consent and without a search warrant.

Any contraband discovered during such searches will be confiscated by the administration. The administration may refer a student to outside agencies for assistance depending upon the severity of the situation.

Non-maintenance Searches – Cooperative owned/provided property and its contents may be searched by a Cooperative administrator when a reasonable suspicion exists that the property contains items that are unauthorized, illegal, or contraband. Whenever possible the student should be aware of and be involved in a search of such property. Emergency situations may necessitate a search with or without the student's knowledge. Such searches should be conducted in the presence of another adult witness.

Vehicle Searches

Students are permitted to park on Cooperative premises as a matter of privilege, not a right. The Cooperative retains authority to conduct routine patrols of the student parking lots and inspections of the exterior of vehicles. The interior of a student's vehicle on the Cooperative premises may be searched by a Cooperative administrator if the administration has reasonable suspicion to believe items that are unauthorized, illegal, or contraband are contained inside. Whenever possible the student should be aware of and be involved in a search of the vehicle. Emergency situations may necessitate a search with or without the student's knowledge or consent. Such searches must always involve two adults.

Scope of any Search

Administration will consider the intrusiveness of the search in light of the age, gender, and the nature of the alleged violation. The scope of any search will be limited to only what is necessary due to the policy/rule violation under investigation. If the search discovers items not related to the policy/rule violation under investigation, but items are found that are in violation of the law or another Cooperative policy/rule, the student may be subject to additional discipline for that additional violation.

Law Enforcement Involvement

Any search and/or seizure by law enforcement officials will occur only when law enforcement officials properly advise Cooperative personnel that they have lawful authority to conduct the search and/or seizure.

Informing Students and Parents/Guardians

Cooperatives shall inform students and parents/guardians of this policy regarding searches and provide written copies on request.

Policy Adopted: August 18, 2021