



## **STRATFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### **Students**

#### **Search and Seizure**

##### **Use of Dogs to Search School Property**

The Stratford Board of Education supports the elimination of the possession or use of illegal substances/devices. The Board wants to convey a strong message to the community, faculty, staff, and student body concerning the use or possession of illegal substances.

The Board shall permit the administration to invite law enforcement agencies or other qualified agencies or individuals to search school property with dogs trained for the purpose of detecting the presence of illegal substances, when necessary to protect the health and safety of students, employees or property and to detect the presence of illegal substances or contraband, including alcohol and/or drugs.

In an effort to keep the schools free of drugs, the District may use specially trained nonaggressive dogs to sniff out and alert staff to the presence of substances prohibited by law or Board policy. The dogs may sniff the air around lockers, desks, or vehicles on District property or at District-sponsored events as long as they are not allowed to sniff within close proximity of any students.

The use of trained canine sniffing dogs is subject to the following:

1. The administration shall authorize the search and the Principal or his/her designee shall be present while the search is taking place.
2. Parents and students shall be notified of this policy through its inclusion in the student and/or parent handbook and on the District's/school's website. In addition, the school shall host an informational meeting for parents and their children regarding this policy and practice.
3. All school property such as lockers, classrooms, parking areas and storage areas may be searched.
  - a. Dogs shall not be used in rooms occupied by persons except for demonstration purposes with the handler present.
  - b. When used for demonstration purposes, the dog may not sniff the person or any individual.
4. Individual(s) shall not be subjected to a search by dogs. To avoid the potential of allergic reactions, dogs shall be kept away from the students.

5. Once notification has been given to parents and students, through the inclusion of the policies in the student and/or parent handbook and on the District's/school's website, the school District will have met its obligation to advertise the searches. Additional notices need not be given and actual times or dates of planned searches need not be released in advance.
6. Only the dog's official handler will determine what constitutes an alert by the dog. If the dog alerts on a particular item or place, the student having the use of that item or place or responsibility for it shall be called to witness the search. If a dog alerts on a locked vehicle, the student who brought it onto District property shall be asked to unlock it for inspection.
7. Before conducting a search based upon an alert, an effort shall be made to seek the student's consent and an effort shall be made to protect the student's privacy to the greatest degree possible.
8. If because of a dog alert, a student's property is searched, the student's parents shall be notified by the school administration.
9. Law enforcement agencies will be given full authorization to investigate and prosecute any person(s) found to be responsible for illegal substances(s) on school property.

(cf. - 5145.12 Search and Seizure)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules.

54-33n Search of school lockers and property.

No. CV094043192S, 2009 WL 3366272 (Conn. Super. Ct. Sept. 14, 2009).

*New Jersey v T.L.O.*, 53 U.S.L.W. 4083 (1985)

*United States v. Place*, 462 U.S. 696, (1983)

*Bd. of Educ. of Indep. Sch. Dist. No. 92 v. Earls*, 536 U.S. 822 (2002).

***Policy Revised and Adopted: April 27, 2015***

***Original Adoption Date:***