

MURFREESBORO CITY SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Term: INTERROGATIONS AND SEARCHES	Descriptor No: STU 21	Date Adopted: 1/01
	Reviewed/Revision Adopted: 6/12	

INTERROGATIONS BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Students may be questioned by teachers or principals about any matter pertaining to the operation of a school and/or the enforcement of its rules. Questioning should be conducted discreetly and under circumstances which will avoid unnecessary embarrassment to the student being questioned. Any student answering falsely, evasively, or refusing to answer a proper question may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension.

If a student is suspected or accused of misconduct or infraction of the Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline, the principal may interrogate the student without the presence of parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians and without giving the student constitutional warnings.

INTERROGATIONS BY POLICE (AT ADMINISTRATOR’S REQUEST)

If the principal has requested assistance by the police department to investigate a crime involving the school, the police shall have permission to interrogate the student in school during school hours. The principal shall first attempt to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians of the student of the intended interrogation unless circumstances require otherwise. The interrogation may proceed without attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians. The principal or the principal’s designee shall be present during the interrogation unless instructed to leave the interrogation by law enforcement officials. The use of a female police officer or a female staff member is desirable in the interrogation of female students.

POLICE-INITIATED INTERROGATIONS

If the police deem circumstances of sufficient urgency to interrogate students at school for unrelated crimes committed outside of school hours, the police department shall first contact the principal regarding the planned interrogation and inform the principal of the probable cause to investigate within the school. The principal shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians of the interrogation unless circumstances require otherwise. The interrogation may proceed without attendance of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal custodians. The principal or the principal’s designee shall be present during the interrogation unless instructed to leave the interrogation by local law enforcement officials. If practicable, the use of female staff members or police officers should be considered in any interrogation of female students.

36 **SEARCHES BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

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38 Any principal or principal's designee having reasonable suspicion may search any student, place,
39 or thing on school property, or in the actual or constructive possession of any student during any
40 organized school activity off campus, including buses, vehicles of students or visitors (notice
41 shall be posted in the school parking lot that vehicles parked on school property by students or
42 visitors are subject to search for drugs, drug paraphernalia, or dangerous weapons), and
43 containers or packages if the principal receives information which would cause a reasonable
44 belief that the search will lead to the discovery of:

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46 1. Evidence of any violation of the law;
47 2. Evidence of any violation of school rules or regulations or proper standards of student or
48 faculty conduct;
49 3. Any object or substance which, because of its presence, presents an immediate danger or
50 harm or illness to any person.

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52 A student using a locker that is the property of the school system does not have the right of
53 privacy in that locker or its contents. All lockers or other storage areas provided for student use
54 on school premises remain the property of the school system and are provided for the use of
55 students subject to inspection, access for maintenance, and search. Notice shall be posted in each
56 school that lockers and other storage areas are school property and are subject to search.

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58 A student may be subject to physical search or a student's pocket, purse, or other container may
59 be required to be emptied because of the results of a locker search or because of information
60 received from a teacher, staff member, or other student if such action is reasonable to the
61 principal. All of the following standards of reasonableness shall be met:

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63 1. A particular student is reasonably believed to have violated policy;
64 2. The search could be expected to yield evidence of the violation of school policy or
65 disclosure of a dangerous weapon or drug;
66 3. The search is in pursuit of legitimate interests of the school in maintaining order,
67 discipline, safety, supervision, and education of students;
68 4. The primary purpose of the search is not to collect evidence for a criminal prosecution;
69 and
70 5. The search shall be reasonable, related to the objectives of the search, and not excessively
71 intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student, as well as the nature of the infraction
72 alleged to have been committed.

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74 School officials may conduct hand-held or walk-through metal detector checks of a student's
75 person or personal effects.

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77 **SEARCHES BY POLICE**

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79 If public health or safety is involved, upon request of the principal who shall be present, police
80 officers may make a general search of students' lockers and desks, or students' or nonstudents'
81 automobiles for drugs, weapons, or items of an illegal or prohibited nature.

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83 If the principal has received reliable information which the principal believes to be true that
84 evidence of a crime or of stolen goods, not involving school property of members of the school
85 staff or student body, is located on school property and that any search for such evidence or
86 goods would be unrelated to school discipline or to the health and safety of a student or the

87 student body, the principal shall request police assistance, and procedures to obtain and execute a
88 search warrant shall thereafter be followed unless there are grounds for a warrantless search.

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90 Anything found in the course of the search conducted in accordance with this policy which is
91 evidence of a violation of the law or a violation of student conduct standards may be:

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93 1. Seized and admitted as evidence in any hearing, trial, suspension, or dismissal
94 proceeding. It should be tagged for identification at the time it is seized and kept in a
95 secure place by the principal or the principal's designee until it is presented at the
96 hearing. At the discretion of the principal, the items seized may be returned to the parent
97 or guardian of a student, or if it has no significant value, the item may be destroyed, but
98 only with the express written permission of the Director of Schools.
- 99 2. Any seized item may be turned over to any law enforcement officer. Any dangerous
100 weapon or drug as defined in T.C.A. §49-6-4202 shall be turned over to an appropriate
101 law enforcement official.

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103 Whenever the possibility of uncovering evidence of a criminal nature exists, the principal or the
104 principal's designee may request the assistance of a law enforcement officer to:

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106 1. Search any areas of the school premises, any student, or any motor vehicle on the school
107 premises; or
- 108 2. Identify or dispose of anything found in the course of a search conducted in accordance
109 with this policy.

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111 The involvement of law enforcement officials is encouraged when there is reasonable cause to
112 suspect that criminal evidence is about to be uncovered. If practicable, the use of female staff
113 members or police officers should be considered in any search of female students.

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129 Legal Reference:

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131 T.C.A. §49-6-4202 through T.C.A. §49-6-4212