

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

No. 817

Section: Operations

Title: Use of Scanning
Equipment to Detect Weapons

Adopted: December 14, 1992

Revised: June 25, 2020

817 USE OF SCANNING EQUIPMENT TO DETECT WEAPONS

Purpose

The Board of Education (“Board”) is committed to maintaining School District of Philadelphia (“District”) schools as safe, secure, and welcoming places for students, staff, and parents. The Board is also committed to the goal of providing schools with the means to maintain a safe climate for all students and staff in a manner which reasonably balances limited intrusions on individual freedoms against the vital public interest in preserving an atmosphere conducive to education in our schools. The purpose of this policy is to establish a transparent and standardized weapons screening process. This process aims to improve student security while promoting each student’s dignity and minimizing negative effects of the screening process.

Authority

The Pennsylvania School Code and Department of Education Regulations provide the Board the authority to issue rules and regulations regarding the management of school affairs, including reasonable policies and procedures regarding searches. The Pennsylvania Crimes Code makes it a misdemeanor of the 1st degree to possess any weapon in a school, school program, or school bus. [1][2][3][4]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board directs the Superintendent or their designee, through the Office of School Safety, to establish School Safety Directives establishing a standardized weapons screening process that is rooted in an approach that considers the unique factors related to adolescent development, setting forth the permissible circumstances and limitations upon the use of magnetometers or scanning devices: [3][4]

1. Based upon reasonable suspicion that a student is in possession of a weapon or where the student has engaged in assaultive conduct; and
2. For comprehensive or random entry searches of students and visitors to schools, school buses, or school programs, athletic contests, or activities.

Mandatory Regulatory Procedures

Other than as mandated by Policy 805, Emergency Preparedness, the Superintendent, through the Office of School Safety or designee, may authorize the use of magnetometers or scanning devices for administrative searches or comprehensive or random entry searches of students and visitors, to schools, school buses, or school programs, athletic contests, or activities. [3][4][5]

The Superintendent, through the Office of School Safety or designee, is authorized to procure, within budgetary constraints, magnetometer or other scanning devices for the purpose of reducing or discouraging the presence of weapons, as defined in Policy 218.1 - Weapons, in our schools.

Legal References:

1. [18 Pa. C.S. § 912](#)
2. [24 P.S. § 5-510](#)
3. [Policy 226 - Searches](#)
4. [22 Pa Code § 12.14](#)
5. [Policy 805 - Emergency Preparedness](#)

Related Information:

[Policy 218.1 - Weapons](#)
[24 P.S. § 13-1301-A](#)
[School Safety Directives](#)