



**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Policy Bulletin**

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**TITLE:** RANDOM METAL DETECTOR SEARCHES

**NUMBER:** BUL-1824.0

**ISSUER:** Dan M. Isaacs  
 Chief Operating Officer

**DATE:** June 20, 2005

**ROUTING**  
 Local District  
 Superintendents  
 Local District Directors  
 of School Services  
 Administrators  
 Local District Operations  
 Coordinators  
 School Police

**POLICY:** The United States Supreme Court ruled in the U.S. Supreme Court case decision T.L.O. vs. New Jersey (1985), 469 U.S. 325, that school districts may conduct metal detector searches under the standard of reasonableness. School metal detector searches may be warranted under the Administrative Search Doctrine, which has provided the constitutional authority for metal detector searches in airports and courthouses. In 1993, the District implemented random metal detector searches under Education Code 35160 *et seq.* and under the settled principles of constitutional construction, the safe schools clause which permits reasonable application of metal detectors in schools.

**PURPOSE:** School systems are faced with ever-increasing violence, including the use of weapons on or adjacent to school campuses. The use of metal detectors could prove to be a useful deterrent when utilized in a random search program. The purpose of a metal detection program within District schools is to deter the bringing of weapons into school grounds, thereby reducing the potential for violent incidents.

**PROCEDURES:** Procedures for Conducting Random Metal Detector Searches

A. Posting Signs

Signs shall be posted in several prominent locations at the site advising that all persons on the premises are subject to search for weapons by metal detector. Schools in need of new or additional signs shall contact Maintenance and Operations for replacements.

B. Selection of Staff to Conduct Metal Detection Searches

The search team should be comprised of certificated employees and augmented with other staff as necessary. School Police may be requested to accompany the search team, but may not participate in the actual searching.



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School Police participation in random searches must be limited to handling arrests or other criminal situations that might occur during the course of a metal detection search operation.

Personnel selected to be members of a school's search team should at all times be respectful and sensitive to the right of privacy and other concerns of the individual being searched.

The searching of any student, employee or visitor shall only be conducted by a member of the search team of the same gender.

### C. Scheduling Metal Detection Searches

It is recommended that searches be conducted on a daily basis. Furthermore, search operations should be conducted at various hours of the school day to avoid predictability.

### D. Selection of Location on the Site to Conduct Metal Detection Searches

Whenever possible, select locations within a building or grounds that do not expose students or other persons being searched to the view of the general student body population, particularly to the view of those who are not at the time being subjected to the search procedure.

Whenever possible, the location of the search operation should be adjacent to the classroom(s) or hallway in which students who are to be subject of the search are located. A nearby vacant classroom, office or workroom should be available in the event that it becomes necessary to more thoroughly search a particular student. This would be the case when a metal detector (wand) activates and it is not possible to satisfactorily determine the cause either through questioning or a light pat-down of the person. Whenever it is necessary for a student to be removed for a more thorough search, he or she shall be accompanied by two adult employees of the same gender as the student. The California Education Code Section 49050, prohibits removal or rearranging of pupil's clothing in a manner to permit a visual inspection of the underclothing, breast, buttocks, or genitals of the pupils.

### E. Random Search Versus Total Population Search

A total population search is one wherein every person who enters the premises is searched; such as at selected athletic events or after-school dances. Although called a random search, a specific pattern of who is to be selected to be searched is established prior to implementation. In addition, the search personnel may not deviate from the pattern during the course of



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that particular session. As an example, every third or fifth person who enters a hallway or classroom may be searched or some other means may be used to establish a method of selection which results in an objective, unbiased search pattern.

No student or persons shall be selected to be searched based solely upon their gender, race, ethnicity, physical appearance, manner of dress, or association with any particular group of persons.

### F. Search Operation

A pre-established random plan should be used to select which students and what articles are to be searched. It is important that sufficient staff be involved in the search to prevent the possibility of any selected student disposing of contraband/weapons or not reporting to the location where the metal detection search is being conducted.

All students selected shall be required to bring all of their personal effects in their possession at the time they are selected, i.e., coat, purse, book bag or other similar articles.

Upon entering the metal detection search location, the selected student shall be advised of the purpose of the operation, the method in which the search will be conducted, and the fact that this selection was made in a random manner.

A student or person to be searched shall be directed to remove all metal objects from his/her pockets (including coins, etc.). The student is to give his/her personal belongings, as described above, to a search team member. These articles shall then be physically searched only to the degree necessary to affirm that no firearms are concealed therein. The student shall then be scanned by a hand-held metal detector (wand). The staff member operating the device must use an identical scanning technique/pattern on each student. If the metal detector activates, the student shall be asked whether he or she is in possession of any metallic object in the area scanned. After determining the suspected article is not a firearm and is removable, request the student to remove the article and re-scan. If an activation reoccurs and the article cannot be removed, the operator shall visually confirm the student's explanation, i.e., jewelry, belt buckle, rivets on pants or as a second alternative, by lightly touching (do not grab) the area which is causing the repeated activation.

The purpose of this program is to deter the bringing of weapons such as guns, knives, or any other item which might cause harm or injury.



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Therefore, under no circumstances are metal detectors to be used solely for the purpose of searching students who might be suspected of having violated other school rules.

Any person found to be in possession of a gun or other dangerous weapon as defined either in the California State Penal or Education Codes shall be arrested. If during the course of a search, contraband is observed that is a violation of published District or school policy and/or regulations, such items may be confiscated.

Students who refuse to submit to a wand search consistent with these guidelines, may be subject to disciplinary actions for defying the valid authority of school personnel. Other persons refusing a search consistent with these guidelines should be escorted off campus.

### G. Searching Other Areas of the School

A locker search plan should be implemented. These searches should be conducted on a daily basis using a random selection pattern. Further, a minimum of ten lockers a day should be searched. Prior to the implementation of daily random locker searches, notification must be given to both students and parents. This may be accomplished by announcements over the public address system/memorandum to parents, etc.

As a matter of daily routine, all members of the school staff should check their areas of responsibility, i.e., classrooms, restrooms or grounds, for concealed weapons.

**ASSISTANCE:** For Assistance, please call Chief Alan Kerstein, School Police at (213) 742-8222.