

Series 5000 – Students

1. Elementary and Secondary

D. Welfare

(9) Civil & Legal Rights and Responsibilities

(a) Invasion of Privacy

(v) Use of Dogs to Search School Property

The Suffield Board of Education supports the elimination of the possession or use of illegal substances or devices and strives to maintain a safe learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors by promoting school buildings and grounds that are free from illegal substances and contraband.

The Suffield Public Schools may request services of the Suffield Police Department K-9 Unit. The primary purpose of requesting such services is to detect 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.

Requests for the presence of the K-9 Unit must be coordinated by the Suffield Public Schools Superintendent or his/her designee, the specific school building Administrator, the SRO, and the K-9 Unit Supervisor. The Superintendent or his/her designee will coordinate with the Police Department to ensure that appropriate Police Department staff are notified of the time and place of K-9 Unit activity at any schools.

All school buildings and grounds, including lockers, desks, storage areas, and parking lots, are the property of the School District and may be subject to search by School Administration without prior notification whenever there is reasonable grounds to believe that a search would produce evidence that a student has violated or is violating the law or school rules. Any searches will be conducted in accordance with Board Policy #5145.12 – Search and Seizure. Students should have no expectation of privacy in the use of desks, lockers, storage areas, parking lots, or other school property.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will establish a procedure to ensure that students and staff remain in classrooms or other designated areas during the presence of the K-9 Unit in a School building or on School grounds.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will ensure that only a certified detection K-9 Unit is present on School grounds. The use of a trained K-9 Unit is subject to the following:

- The District Administration shall request and authorize the presence of the K-9 Unit and the Principal and/or the Principal's designee shall be present at all times while the K-9 Unit is present on School grounds and shall accompany the K-9 Unit.

- Parents and students have been notified of this Policy through its inclusion in the student and parent handbook and on the District’s website.
- The K-9 Unit may be present anywhere on school grounds, including hallways, locker areas, classrooms, parking areas, and storage areas. The Superintendent or his/her designee will ensure that the K-9 Unit is not used in rooms occupied by persons except for demonstration purposes with the handler present, and when used for demonstration purposes, the canine sniffing dog may not sniff any individual.
- Individuals shall not be subject to a K-9 sniff.
- Only a member of the K-9 Unit will determine what constitutes an alert by the K-9.

Upon K-9 detection of illegal or dangerous substances or materials, School Administration will be responsible for any opening or searching of any lockers, bags, containers, or vehicles identified by the K-9 Unit as containing illegal or dangerous substances or materials. In the event that there is a legitimate concern of a health or safety risk, appropriate first responders may be called upon.

If a student’s locker, bag, container, vehicle, or other item is searched by the School Administration as a result of a K-9 Unit alert, the student’s parent or guardian will be notified in writing by the School Administration. Parents or guardians will also be notified of any resulting disciplinary action in accordance with Board policies and school procedures.

In the event of K-9 detection of illegal or dangerous substances or materials, School Administration will address violations of the student code of conduct in accordance with school disciplinary procedures. If the School Administration believes that a criminal violation has occurred, the School Administration may refer the matter for police action.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will ensure that the Suffield Police Department is responsible for the disposal of any discovered contraband.

(cf. 5145.12 Search and Seizure)

Legal Reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §54.33n: Search of school lockers and property
 Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-221: Board of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures
 Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-154a: Professional communications between teacher or nurse and student. Surrender of physical evidence obtained from students.
Bd. of Educ. v. Earls, 536 U.S. 822 (2002).
New Jersey v. T.L.O., 469 U.S. 325 (1985).
United States v. Place, 462 U.S. 696 (1983).
Burbank v. Canton Bd. of Educ., CV 094043192S, 2009 Conn. Super. LEXIS 252 (Conn. Super. Ct., Sept. 14, 2009).

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SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 Suffield, Connecticut