



DENVER  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

Climate and Safety



# Student Searches

Fall 2023

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [Policy JIH & Action Intervention Plans](#)
2. [Terms: Searches, Contraband, & Seizures](#)
3. [Two Pronged Test](#)
4. [When to Contact DPS DoCS](#)
5. [When \*Not\* to Contact DPS DoCS](#)
6. [When to Search](#)
7. [Search Rules & Responsibilities](#)
8. [How to Search](#)
9. [Additional Support](#)



## **Policy JIH:** Student Interrogations, Searches and Arrests

“It may be necessary for school personnel to search the person and or the personal property of a student and to seize any property deemed injurious or detrimental to the safety and welfare of students and staff.”



# TERMS:

**Searches:** "Reasonable suspicion" is based on facts provided by a reliable informant or personal observations which cause the school official to believe, based on personal experience and common sense that the search of a particular person, place or thing would lead to the discovery of evidence of a violation of Board policy, school rule or state or federal laws.

**Contraband:** consists of all substances or materials prohibited by Board policy or state or federal law including but not limited to drugs, alcohol, guns, knives, other weapons or incendiary devices.

**Seizure:** the taking possession of a person or property by legal process.

# TWO PRONGED TEST:

Is a Search Warranted?

1. **Justified at its Inception:** A student search is justified when there are specific and articulable facts known to the school official, which taken together with rational inferences from these facts, create reasonable suspicion of criminal activity or school rule violations.
2. **Reasonable Scope:** The search must be reasonably related in scope to the circumstances that justified the initial interference. In other words, a search will be permissible when the measures adopted are reasonably related to the objective of the search and not excessively intrusive given the type of infraction and the age and sex of the student.



# Action Intervention Plans

“The District will leverage and expand upon the resources available through the Department of Climate and Safety to support school teams with the implementation of Action Intervention Plans that call for searches of students who may be in possession of a firearm. This includes a plan for regional coverage by existing patrol officers (armed) and CSOs (unarmed, school based) to provide particular support on a case by case basis, depending on the needs of individual schools and their students.”

-Long Term Operational Safety Plan 2023



# Action Intervention Plans - Searches

The Department of Climate and Safety (DoCS) will conduct and support school administrators in ensuring searches are conducted in a safe manner and based on current policy and legal requirements.

During an Action Intervention Plan (AIP) safety search of a student, where information indicates the student has/had possessed a weapon (firearm), the search shall be coordinated in conjunction with support from the School Leader or Designee however, conducted by an armed DoCS patrol officer.



# **When to Contact DPS DoCS for a Search**



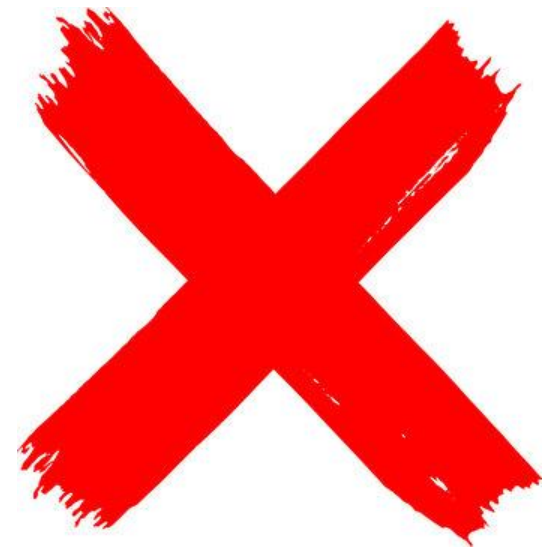


Contact DPS Department of Climate and Safety when an AIP Safety Search requires support from an armed patrol officer. This would be required ONLY when information indicates that the student has/had possessed a firearm. The search process shall be coordinated in conjunction with support from School Administrators however, the physical search will be conducted by an armed patrol officer.

The School Leader or designee will call DoCS Dispatch and request support from a patrol officer when a student(s) with a weapon related AIP arrives at school and needs to be searched. Only DoCS Patrol Officers should search students unless an AIP lists other individuals as responsible for the search (in which case notification is not required unless a firearm or dangerous weapon is in fact discovered).



## **When Not to Contact DPS DoCS for a Search**



No notification to DoCS Dispatch is necessary unless, during the search, a weapon is discovered. Campus Safety Officers (CSOs) and designated school staff are authorized to conduct administrative searches for other prohibited items (vape pens, illegal substances, contraband, etc.).



# SEARCHES: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## School Staff

- A principal or school official who has a reasonable suspicion that a search will turn up evidence that a student has violated school policy or the law may conduct a search.
- A principal or school official who has knowledge of a student with an Action Intervention Plan involving a dangerous weapon (DoCS should be made aware immediately).
- Any search conducted by a school official shall respect the privacy of the student and may not be more intrusive than necessary.
- Anything found in the course of a search conducted by school officials which is evidence of a violation of the law, district policy, school rule or which by its presence presents an immediate danger of physical harm may be seized.



# SEARCHES: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

continued...

- The principal or designee may search the person of a student if the school official has a reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of contraband.
- Search of the person shall be limited to the student's pockets, any objects in the student's possession such as a purse or briefcase, and/or a "pat down" of the exterior clothing.
- Only the removal of outer clothing, bulky jackets or multiple layers of hoodies, footwear etc. is allowable.
- Searches which may require the removal of clothing other than a coat, jacket, or footwear, which impacts the students privacy shall be referred to a law enforcement officer. School personnel shall not participate in such searches.



A decorative geometric pattern in the top-left corner, consisting of a purple triangle with a white border and a blue triangle with a white border, both featuring a pattern of small, interconnected triangles.

# **How to Conduct a Search**

# SEARCHES: STEP 1

- Determine the location where the search will occur.
- Escort the to be searched student(s) to the office.
  - At least two staff members should escort the student(s)
  - Stops along the way to the search location should not be permitted.



# SEARCHES: STEP 2

- Inform the student(s) of the reason for the search.
- Explain the search process.
- Describe what contraband or illegal you believe is in their possession.
- Give the student the opportunity to surrender the item first.



# SEARCHES: STEP 3

- If a student surrenders the item(s) that warranted a justifiable search: continue a dialogue with the student and determine if there are articulable facts known to continue the search.
- If a student surrenders a different item or doesn't surrender anything: that students should then remove all outer clothing such as coats, sweaters, hats, and shoes.



# SEARCHES: STEP 4 (NON-DANGEROUS)

*Search of a backpack for drugs, paraphernalia or other prohibited non-dangerous items.*

- Once an item has been separated from the student(s), staff will conduct a systematic search of the backpack starting from the most front pocket moving to the most rear pocket.
- When removing items from the backpack, place them onto a table while also keeping track of them. If prohibited items are located place them separately from the rest. Keep the search within reason of what the suspected item(s) are.

# SEARCHES: STEP 4 (DANGEROUS)

*Search of a person for suspected gun or dangerous weapon*

- If applicable, alert the onsite Campus Safety Officer and Student Resource Officer.
- Notify the Department of Safety Dispatch at ext: 43911 next.
- Secure the student in an office with staff observing them until CSO, SRO or Patrol Officer arrives to take the lead on the search.

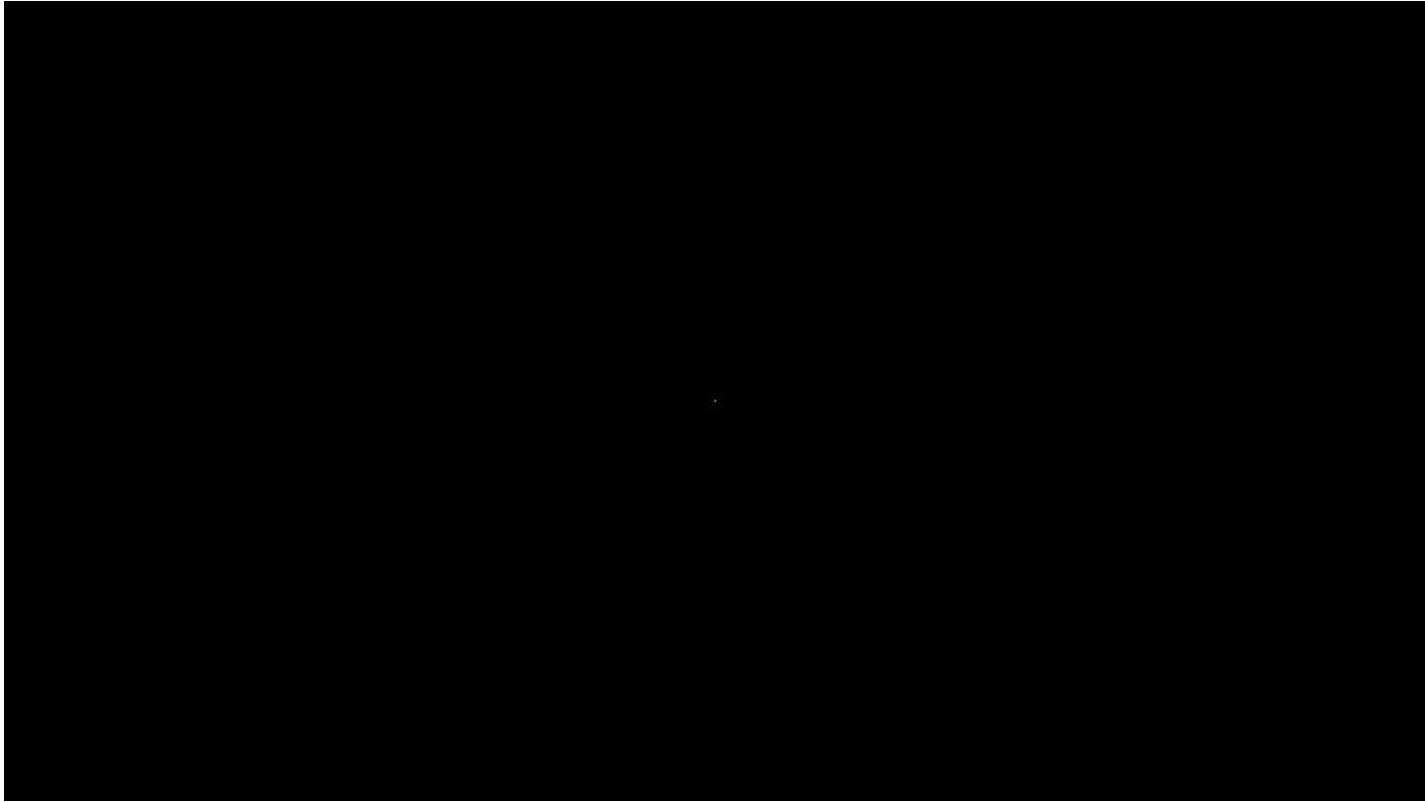
# SEARCHES: STEP 5 (WEAPON DETECTED)

*Search of a backpack for suspected gun or dangerous weapon*

- Ensure the student(s) backpack has been removed from them and can be kept in a separate room as extra precaution.
- If a gun or other dangerous weapon is located in the backpack,  
**SLOW DOWN.**
- Update the Department of Safety Dispatch immediately.
- Secure the backpack with the weapon in a locked room or desk until a CSO or Patrol Officer arrives on scene.



# SEARCHES: EXAMPLE



# SEARCHES: REMINDERS

- Always watch the student's hands.
- Always have another school official present as a witness from the inception of the search until the evidence is properly secured.
- Student searches should be conducted and witnessed by school officials of the same identified gender as the student whenever possible.
- Searches should be conducted in a discreet manner to cause the least amount of embarrassment possible.

# ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Search Procedure Training can be requested through the Department of Climate and Safety using [this form](#).

Please reach out to these contacts if you have questions:

[Kip Sixbery](#), Emergency Manager

[Lisa Wehrli](#), Patrol Operations Division

[Valarie Barrientos](#), Campus Safety Division

DPS Dispatch, 24/7 Dispatch Center: 720-423-3911 (33911 from any district phone)

