



# LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

**TITLE:** Random Metal Detector Searches

**NUMBER:** BUL-5424.1

**ISSUER:** Michelle King, Senior Deputy Superintendent  
School Operations

Earl R. Perkins, Assistant Superintendent  
School Operations

**DATE:** July 21, 2014

**ROUTING**  
Instructional Superintendents  
Administrators of Operations  
Operations Coordinators  
Site Administrators  
School Police

**MAJOR CHANGES** This Bulletin updates BUL-5424.0, dated April 12, 2011, issued by School Operations, to reflect current District organization, procedures, and practices.

- GUIDELINES:**
- I. Background
    - A. Schools are faced with instances of violence, including the use of weapons on or adjacent to school campuses. The District has implemented random metal detector searches under the settled principles of constitutional construction, which permits reasonable application of metal detectors in schools.
    - B. The purpose of these searches is to deter weapons such as guns, knives, or any other item which might cause harm or injury from being brought to schools. Therefore, metal detectors should not be used for the purpose of searching students who might be suspected of having violated other school rules.
    - C. This policy is applicable to all secondary schools and span schools configured for students in grades 6 through 12. Co-located schools, schools on the same campus, are to conduct searches and maintain search logs independent of any other school(s) on the same campus.
    - D. 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 or weapons while walking to the location where the metal detector search is to be conducted.
    - E. School administrators may conduct searches of individual students when they have reasonable suspicion to believe that the student has violated or is violating the law or a school rule. “Reasonable suspicion” includes the following: Reasonable suspicion that the search will turn up evidence of the student’s violation; the extent of the search is reasonably related to the



## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

---

suspected violation; and the search is not excessively intrusive considering the student's age, gender and the nature of the violation.

- F. 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.

### II. Frequency of Metal Detector Searches

- A. It is required that all secondary schools conduct daily random metal detector searches of students. Search operations should be conducted at various hours of the school day to avoid predictability.
- B. Schools are to keep a record of their random metal detector searches. A logbook of the searches must be kept for the entire school by the administrator in charge and be readily available for review. These logs must be kept on file for three years. A sample log is attached to this bulletin (see Attachment C).

### III. Public Advisory of Searches

- A. Although parents are advised of the possibility that their child may be searched in the Parent-Student Handbook, schools must send written communication to parents at the opening of the school year. This communication is to be provided for all students enrolling after the school year has begun. See Attachment A for sample communication.
- B. Signs must be posted in several prominent site locations 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.

### IV. Minimum Equipment Resources

- A. Every secondary school with an enrollment fewer than 1000 students shall have a minimum of two metal detector wands (wands).
- B. Every secondary school with an enrollment of 1000 students or greater shall have a minimum of four wands.
- C. All wands must be operable and used at every search. Additional wands can be purchased from LAUSD Stores Warehouse using commodity code 680-44-20580. Schools are responsible for purchasing all wands.



## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

---

### V. Selection of Search Team Members

- A. The search team should be comprised of certificated employees, both male and female, and augmented with other staff as necessary.
- B. Personnel selected to be members of the search team must be respectful and sensitive to the right of privacy and other concerns of the individual being searched.
- C. The searching of any student, employee or visitor shall only be conducted by a search team member of the same gender.
- D. School Police may be requested to accompany and observe the search team, but may not participate in the actual searching. School Police participation in random searches must be limited to handling arrests or other criminal situations that might occur during the course of a search. School Safety Officers (SSOs) who are properly trained may assist with random metal detector searches as they are not sworn officers.
- E. Metal detector search team members must be familiar with both District policy and the operation of the wands. All search team members, including the administrator in charge, must complete STEPS course 215, "How to Conduct a Random Metal Detector Search" via the Learning Zone, *prior* to conducting any searches and should submit a copy of their completion certificate to the administrator in charge. Completion certificates will be available for review by Educational Service Center (ESC) staff.

### VI. Locations For Conducting Metal Detection Searches

- A. Whenever possible, searches should be conducted in locations 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 being subjected to the search.
- B. 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 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, the student shall be accompanied by at least two adult employees, one of whom must be of the same gender as the student. California Education Code Section 49050 prohibits removal or rearranging of a pupil's clothing in a manner to permit a visual inspection of the underclothing, breast, buttocks, or genitals of the pupils.



## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

---

### VII. Procedures for Conducting Random Searches

- A. A random search establishes a specific, unbiased pattern of who is to be searched, i.e., every third person. Search personnel may not deviate from the search pattern during the course of that particular search.
- B. All students selected will be required to bring all of their personal effects in their possession at the time they are selected, e.g., coat, purse, book bag, backpack, or other similar articles.
- C. Upon entering the search location, the selected student shall be advised of the purpose of the search, the method in which the search will be conducted, and the fact that the selection was made in a random manner.
- D. A student or person to be searched shall be directed to remove all metal objects from their pockets, including coins. The student is to give their personal belongings, as described above, to a search team member or place them on a table or desk in plain view. The belongings shall then be physically searched only to the degree necessary to affirm that no weapons are concealed therein. The student shall then be scanned using a wand. Staff operating the device must use an identical scanning technique/pattern for each student.
- E. The staff member will scan the entire student, including socks, legs, front and back pockets, waist, and chest.
- F. If the wand activates, the student shall be asked if they are in possession of any metal object in the area scanned. After determining that the object is not a weapon and is removable, staff will request that the student remove the object and re-scan the student. If an activation reoccurs and the object cannot be removed, the operator shall visually confirm the student's explanation, e.g., jewelry, belt, buckle, rivets on pants or as a second alternative, by lightly touching (not grabbing) the area which is causing the repeated activation.
- G. If, during the course of a search, contraband is observed that is a violation of District or school policy and/or regulations, such items may be confiscated and the student may be subject to disciplinary action.
- H. Students who refuse to submit to a wand search consistent with these guidelines may be subject to disciplinary action for defying the valid authority of school personnel. Other persons refusing a search consistent with these guidelines must be escorted off campus.



## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

---

### VIII. Random Search Versus Total Population Search

- A. A total population search is one wherein every person who enters the premises is searched, such as at an athletic event or after-school dance.

### IX. Searching Other Areas Of The School

- A. A locker search plan must be implemented in which a minimum of ten lockers are searched daily. Prior to the implementation, notification must be given to both students and parents. This may be accomplished by announcements over the public address system or a letter to parents.
- B. When lockers are searched, written notification must be left within the locker informing the student that the locker was searched (see Attachment B). Schools can request school police K-9 participation in locker searches.
- C. All members of the school staff should check their areas of responsibility, e.g., classrooms, restrooms, or grounds for concealed weapons daily.

### X. Review Process

- A. Operations coordinators are to review log sheets upon every school visit.
- B. To ensure consistent implementation of this bulletin, by the end of the second week of each semester, the ESC Administrator of Operations will select six secondary schools to participate in a review process during October or March. In addition, two options schools will be selected from each geographical ESC to participate in the review process see Attachments D1 and D2. During the month of participation, principals of selected schools will submit the daily Metal Detection Search Log, Attachment C, to the respective ESC Operations Coordinator every Friday by 2 p.m.

**AUTHORITY:** This is a policy of the Office of the Sr. Deputy Superintendent for School Operations.  
*New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, 469 U.S. 325 (1985).  
*Vernonia School District v. Acton*, 115 S.Ct. 2386 (1985),  
*People v. Latisha W.*, 60 Cal.App.4<sup>th</sup>1524 (1998).  
*In Re William V.*, 111 Cal.App.4<sup>th</sup> 1464 (2003).  
*In Re Randy G.*, 26 Cal. 4<sup>th</sup> 556 (2001).  
California Education Code sections 35160 and 49050.  
75 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 155 (1992).

**RELATED RESOURCES:** Learning Zone course STEPS 215 “How to Conduct a Random Metal Detector Search”.



## LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

---

**ASSISTANCE:** For assistance, please contact your ESC Operations Coordinator. For more information, contact the Office of School Operations at (213) 241-5337 or the Los Angeles School Police Department at (213) 625-6631.