

CHAPTER 808A

STUDENT SEARCHES

Referred to in §801.1

For general search and seizure law, see chapter 808

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808A.1 Definitions.

As used in [this chapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “Protected student area” includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. A student’s body.
 - b. Clothing worn or carried by a student.
 - c. A student’s pocketbook, briefcase, duffel bag, bookbag, backpack, knapsack, or any other container used by a student for holding or carrying personal belongings of any kind and in the possession or immediate proximity of the student.
2. “School” means a public or nonpublic educational institution offering any of grades kindergarten through twelve.
3. “School official” means a licensed school employee, and includes unlicensed school employees employed for security or supervision purposes.
4. “Student” means a person enrolled in a school for any of grades kindergarten through twelve.
5. “Student search rule” means a rule established by the school board of a public school, pursuant to [section 279.8](#) or [279.9](#), or the authorities in charge of a nonpublic school controlling the manner of the searching of students or protected student areas and school lockers, desks, and other facilities or spaces owned by the school. A student search rule, to be valid for purposes of [this chapter](#), shall require that all searches of students or protected student areas be reasonably related in scope to the circumstances which gave rise to the need for the search and based upon consideration of relevant factors which include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. The nature of the violation for which the search is being instituted.
 - b. The age or ages and gender of the students who may be searched pursuant to the rule.
 - c. The objectives to be accomplished by the search.

[86 Acts, ch 1129, §1; 89 Acts, ch 265, §40; 95 Acts, ch 191, §55; 97 Acts, ch 84, §1, 2](#)

808A.2 Searches of students, protected student areas, lockers, desks, and other facilities or spaces.

1. The school board of each public school and the authorities in charge of each nonpublic school shall establish and may search a student or protected student area pursuant to a student search rule. The student search rule shall be published in each public school’s and each nonpublic school’s student handbook. A school official may search individual students and individual protected student areas if both of the following apply:

- a. The official has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will produce evidence that a student has violated or is violating either the law or a school rule or regulation.
 - b. The search is conducted in a manner which is reasonably related to the objectives of the search and which is not excessively intrusive in light of the age and gender of the student and the nature of the infraction.
2. School officials may conduct periodic inspections of all, or a randomly selected number of, school lockers, desks, and other facilities or spaces owned by the school and provided as a courtesy to a student. The furnishing of a school locker, desk, or other facility or space owned by the school and provided as a courtesy to a student shall not create a protected student area, and shall not give rise to an expectation of privacy on a student’s part with respect to that

locker, desk, facility, or space. Allowing students to use a separate lock on a locker, desk, or other facility or space owned by the school and provided to the student shall also not give rise to an expectation of privacy on a student's part with respect to that locker, desk, facility, or space. However, each year when school begins, the school district shall provide written notice to all students and the students' parents, guardians, or legal custodians, that school officials may conduct periodic inspections of school lockers, desks, and other facilities or spaces owned by the school and provided as a courtesy to a student without prior notice. An inspection under [this subsection](#) shall either occur in the presence of the students whose lockers are being inspected or the inspection shall be conducted in the presence of at least one other person.

3. Under no circumstances may a search be made which is unreasonable in light of the following:

- a. The age of the student.
- b. The nonseriousness of the violation.
- c. The sex of the student.
- d. The nature of the suspected violation.

4. A school official shall not conduct a search which involves:

- a. A strip search.
- b. A body cavity search.
- c. The use of a drug sniffing animal to search a student's body.
- d. The search of a student by a school official not of the same sex as the student.

5. If a student is not or will not be present at the time a search of a protected student area is conducted pursuant to [subsection 1](#), the student shall be informed of the search either prior to or as soon as is reasonably practicable after the search is conducted.

[86 Acts, ch 1129, §2; 94 Acts, ch 1172, §62; 95 Acts, ch 191, §56; 97 Acts, ch 84, §3 – 6; 98 Acts, ch 1100, §91](#)

808A.3 Student search by peace officer.

The search of a student or of a protected student area by a peace officer who is not a school official, or by a school official at the invitation or direction of a peace officer who is not a school official, shall be governed by the statutory and common law requirements for police searches.

[86 Acts, ch 1129, §3](#)

808A.4 Exclusion of evidence.

Material or evidence obtained directly or indirectly as a result of a search conducted in violation of [this chapter](#) is inadmissible in a criminal proceeding against a student.

[86 Acts, ch 1129, §4](#)