

Adopted from MSBA/MASA Model Policy 502, Orig. 1995, Rev. 1999

Approved: 11/18/21 by Board of Directors

Revised:

**BLUFFVIEW MONTESSORI SCHOOL  
POLICY 502  
SEARCH OF STUDENT LOCKERS, DESKS, PERSONAL POSSESSIONS, AND  
STUDENT'S PERSON**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide for a safe and healthful educational environment by enforcing Bluffview Montessori School's policies against contraband.

**II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

A. Lockers/Cubicles

Pursuant to Minnesota statutes, school lockers/cubicles are the property of Bluffview Montessori School. At no time does Bluffview Montessori School relinquish its exclusive control of lockers/cubicles provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of lockers/cubicle may be conducted by school officials for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. The personal possessions of students within a school locker/cubicle may be searched only when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. As soon as practicable after the search of a student's personal possessions, the school officials must provide notice of the search to students whose lockers/cubicles were searched unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials.

B. Desk, Tables, or Other Individually Assigned or Chosen Work Spaces

School desks, tables, and other work spaces are the property of Bluffview Montessori School. At no time does Bluffview Montessori School relinquish its exclusive control of desks, tables, and other work spaces provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of desks, tables, and other work spaces may be conducted by school officials for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

C. Personal Possessions and Student's Person

The personal possessions of students and/or a student's person may be searched when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school rules. The search will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness.

- D. A violation of this policy occurs when students use lockers/cubicles and desks, tables, or other work spaces or unauthorized purposes or to store contraband. A violation occurs when students carry contraband on their person or in their personal possessions.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. “Contraband” means any unauthorized item possession of which is prohibited by Bluffview Montessori School policy and/or law. It includes, but is not limited to, weapons and “look-alikes,” alcoholic beverages, controlled substances and “look-alikes,” overdue books and other materials belonging to Bluffview Montessori School, and stolen property.
- B. “Personal possessions” includes, but is not limited to, purses, backpacks, bookbags, packages, and clothing.
- C. “Reasonable suspicion” means that a school official has grounds to believe that the search will result in evidence of a violation of Bluffview Montessori School policy, rules, and/or law. Reasonable suspicion may be based on a school official’s personal observation, a report from a student, parent or staff member, a student’s suspicious behavior, a student’s age and past history or record of conduct both in and out of the school context, or other reliable sources of information.
- D. “Reasonable scope” means that the scope and/or intrusiveness of the search is reasonably related to the objectives of the search. Factors to consider in determining what is reasonable include the seriousness of the suspected infraction, the reliability of the information, the necessity of acting without delay, the existence of exigent circumstances necessitating an immediate search and further investigation (e.g., to prevent violence, serious and immediate risk of harm or destruction of evidence), and the age of the student.

### **IV. PROCEDURES**

- A. School officials may inspect the interiors of lockers/cubicles and desks, tables, and other work spaces for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.
- B. School officials may inspect the personal possessions of a student and/or a student’s person based on a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school rules. A search of personal possessions of a student and/or a student’s person will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness.

- C. As soon as practicable after a search of personal possessions within a locker/cubicle pursuant to this policy, the school officials must provide notice of the search to students whose possessions were searched unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials.
- D. Whenever feasible, a search of a person shall be conducted in private by a school official of the same sex. A second school official of the same sex shall be present as an observer during the search of a person whenever feasible.
- E. A strip search is a search involving the removal of coverings or clothing from private areas. Mass strip searches, or body cavity searches, are prohibited. Strip searches will be conducted only in circumstances involving imminent danger.
- F. A school official conducting any other search may determine when it is appropriate to have a second official present as an observer.
- G. A copy of this policy will be printed in the student handbook or disseminated in any other way which school officials deem appropriate. Bluffview Montessori School shall provide a copy of this policy to a student when the student is given use of a locker/cubicle.

## **V. DIRECTIVES AND GUIDELINES**

School administration may establish reasonable directives and guidelines which address specific needs of Bluffview Montessori School, such as use of tape in lockers, standards of cleanliness and care, posting of pin-ups and posters which may constitute sexual harassment, etc.

## **VI. SEIZURE OF CONTRABAND**

If a search yields contraband, school officials will seize the item and, where appropriate, turn it over to legal officials for ultimate disposition.

## **VII. VIOLATIONS**

A student found to have violated this policy and/or the directives and guidelines implementing it shall be subject to discipline in accordance with Bluffview Montessori School's Student Discipline Policy, which may include suspension, exclusion, or expulsion, and the student may, when appropriate, be referred to legal officials.

**Legal References:** U. S. Const., amend. IV

Minn. Const., art. I, § 10  
Minn. Stat. § 121A.72 (School Locker Policy)  
*New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, 469 U.S. 325, 105 S.Ct. 733, 83 L.Ed.2d 720  
(1985)  
*G.C. v. Owensboro Public Schools*, 711 F.3d 623 (6<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2013)

**Cross References:** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 417 (Chemical Use and Abuse)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 418 (Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free  
School)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 501 (School Weapons)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)