



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

SAFETY AND SECURITY ENHANCEMENT

AP No. 2804.1

Effective Date: August 20, 2025

- I. **PURPOSE:** To outline the process for ensuring school safety for students, staff, and visitors through the use of security enhancement devices, while defining the roles and responsibilities of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) staff, students, and visitors.
- II. **POLICY:** The Board of Education of Prince George's County (Board) is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment free from dangerous or illegal items and those items that constitute a violation of the PGCPS Code of Student Conduct. In furtherance of its commitment to provide a safe and secure learning environment, the Board authorizes certain statutorily designated school officials to conduct a reasonable search of a student and of a student's personal belongings while on school property or during any school-sponsored activity in accordance with Maryland law and this policy. (Board Policy 2804)
- III. **BACKGROUND:** The mission of PGCPS is to provide a transformative educational experience anchored by excellence in equity. Our core values articulate our beliefs about students, learning, stakeholder responsibility, and the elements necessary to achieve equity and excellence in education. One of our core beliefs is that all staff share the responsibility for a safe and supportive school environment conducive to learning for students, staff and visitors, contributing to excellence in education.
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**
 - A. *Authorized PGCPS Searcher* — A principal, assistant principal, or Safety and Security Services Assistant. An authorized searcher may also be a teacher on a school-sponsored trip who has been so designated in writing by the principal/designee and who has been trained in conducting searches consistent with this administrative procedure. School Resource Officers (SRO), Lead Safety and Security Services Counselors, Safety and Security Services Counselors and other law enforcement

officers are not considered authorized searchers for the purposes of this administrative procedure.

- B. *Contraband* – Weapons, illegal drugs, and any other item that students are banned from possessing by any applicable federal, state, or local law, or Board policy or PGCPs administrative procedure, or an individual school’s written protocols.

- B. *Law enforcement personnel and government agency officials* – Includes any duly authorized county, state, or federal police officer, as well as investigators of the Prince George’s County Fire Marshall’s Office, representatives of the Prince George’s County Department of Juvenile Services, representatives of the Office of the Prince George’s County State’s Attorney, and caseworkers of the Prince George’s County Department of Social Services. This also includes individuals who maintain an active law enforcement certification or currently hold a Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act certification (LEOSA).
 - 1. *Off-duty* – law enforcement personnel or a government agency official not actively working in their official capacity. This individual can be in plain clothes or an official uniform;
 - 2. *Official police business* – when law enforcement personnel or a government agency official enters a school to fulfill their duties as stipulated by their job requirements, such as conducting investigations or enforcement activities;
 - 3. *On-duty* – refers to plain clothes or uniformed law enforcement personnel or government agency official engaged in official services related to investigations or enforcement for their respective department or agency; or
 - 4. *Parental visit* – when law enforcement personnel or a government agency official has a child attending a PGCPs school.

- C. *Pat down* – A non-invasive physical search conducted by authorized PGCPs searcher in which the outer clothing of a person is lightly touched or patted to check for contraband; also referred to as a frisk.

- D. *Personal property* – Any item(s) not owned or leased by PGCPs that is brought on PGCPs property by a student or visitor.

- E. *Safety and Security Assistant* –PGCPs employee tasked with maintaining a safe and secure environment for students, staff, and visitors. Their responsibilities typically include monitoring school premises, enforcing safety protocols, and responding to incidents that may arise during school hours or after-school events.

- F. *School official* – Principal/designee, and anyone who is properly designated by a school Principal, including the Safety and Security Assistant, to assist in the screening process. *School official* does not include the School Resource Officers (SROs), Lead Safety and Security Counselors, Safety and Security Counselors, or volunteers, and this administrative procedure does not authorize any such individual to conduct screenings.
- G. *School property* – Any PGCPs owned, controlled, or leased property or vehicle, including buses operated by contracted vendors. *School property* includes, but is not limited to, desks, cubbies, lockers, and portable electronic communication devices including laptops, or other school property assigned to a student for educational purposes.
- H. *Search and seizure* – A *search* is an examination of a student’s person or property with the intent of discovering an item or items, the possession of which is a violation of the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, any Board policy or rule, PGCPs administrative procedure or law, or a criminal offense under the laws of Maryland. A *seizure* is the act of taking possession of the discovered item.
- I. *Security enhancement device* – Any tool, system, or technology designed to prevent, detect, or respond to threats to the safety and security of individuals on school property. These devices are used to enhance physical security measures and support situational awareness. This includes, but is not limited to:
1. Metal Detection Systems (e.g., walk-through and handheld metal detectors): Devices used to screen individuals for the presence of contraband.
 2. Surveillance Systems: Cameras and monitoring technology that support real-time observation and recording of activities.
 3. Access Control Devices: Tools that restrict or monitor entry to specific areas, such as keycard readers or biometric scanners.
 4. Barrier Systems: Structures such as bollards or secured doors used to limit movement or unauthorized access.
- J. *Security Enhancement Equipment Activation* – Occurs when a metal detection system responds, by alarm or other signal, indicating the detection of a weapon or other contraband.
- K. *Security Enhancement Equipment Screening (Screening)* – The use of security enhancement devices including metal detection system on students and visitors entering a school facility or their belongings on a given date.
- L. *Training* – A hands-on training session will be conducted, during which school-based staff will receive direct, in-person instruction and practice operating security enhancement devices, including metal detection systems. The training could include demonstrations, guided practice, and scenario-based exercises to ensure participants

are prepared to use the equipment safely, effectively, and in accordance with established procedures. This training is intended for school-based staff, including security personnel, principals, assistant principals, and other designated support staff. The goal is to ensure all relevant personnel are confident and prepared to operate all security enhancement equipment effectively and in accordance with established safety protocols in this administrative procedure.

- M. *Visitor* – Any person, who is not a current student of the school or an identified employee of PGCPSS on official business, who has legitimate school system business, to include, but not limited to: parent-teacher conferences, pre-arranged classroom visits, classroom observation, attendance at other school events or appointments with school employees.

V. **PROCEDURES:**

- A. 1. It will be the responsibility of every school official to greet each student/visitor entering PGCPSS schools with respect and dignity. This is particularly important when students are required to pass through security enhancement devices and their possessions are X-rayed for contraband. Personnel will greet positively each student/visitor and respond to their reasonable inquiries. It is recognized in security circles that these initial engagements facilitate a positive interaction but also can assist in identifying potential problems.
2. School officials being polite and friendly contribute significantly to setting the tone for the day and putting students at ease while also making them feel safe and secure in the school environment.

B. Security Enhancement Screenings

1. PGCPSS implements various screening processes and devices in keeping with the district's commitment to providing a safe and secure learning environment. There are two types of security enhancement screenings authorized by this administrative procedure:
- a. **Daily Screening:** The Superintendent may authorize daily security enhancement screenings using school officials. This authorization will be provided in writing to the school Principal with a copy to the Director of Safety and Security Services and must be re-authorized each school year.
 - b. **Random School Screenings:** Random school security enhancement screenings are an effective and necessary means of detecting and deterring the possession of contraband (including weapons) and preventing negative consequences, *i.e.*, student violence, from occurring on school property. The Director of Safety and Security Services may authorize random security enhancement screenings to address particular safety concerns, such as recent violence in the

neighborhood, and during special events, i.e., athletic competitions or visits by dignitaries. Principals or Assistant Principals must request prior authorization to conduct a random screening from the Director of Safety and Security.

C. General Guidelines

1. Under no circumstances may school officials select a particular student(s) to be searched screened when no other student is being screened or when conducting during a random screening the student, unless there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of a weapon or other contraband.
2. Prior to use in conducting a screening pursuant to this administrative procedure, each security enhancement device to be used shall be examined by a person familiar with its operation to determine if it is in proper working order. A security enhancement device shall not be used if there is any question as to whether it is in proper working order.
3. All schools with permanently installed walk-through security enhancement devices or mobile/wand devices, whether used randomly or daily, must post a sign outside the entrance to be used for security enhancement screening stating: *“Students and visitors entering this building will be subject to screening with a security enhancement device.”* Schools must also include information about their safety enhancement screening process in their Student Handbook, if any handbooks are distributed to students at the beginning of the year or term.
4. There should be adequate space near security enhancement devices to maintain order among students and visitors waiting to be screened; areas should be arranged in a way that prevents students and visitors from bypassing the screening procedure. Wherever possible, screenings shall be conducted in areas where there are PGCPs surveillance systems. Students, staff members and visitors will not be permitted to use personal video or audio recording devices while waiting for a screening or in the vicinity of where a screening is being conducted.
5. All entrances not used for security enhancement device screenings must be locked so as to prevent entry from the outside but shall remain operable from the inside to comply with Fire Codes. If feasible, school personnel should be posted near locked doors to prevent screened students from assisting others in circumventing the screening process.
6. Tables must be placed adjacent to walk-through security enhancement devices and shall have ample containers to accommodate the personal metal possessions of students and visitors passing through the device.

7. Prior to a visitor or student's passage through a walk-through security enhancement device, they shall be instructed to remove objects with metal from their person (such as belt buckles, jewelry, and cellphones) and from their bags and coats (such as binders and laptops) and place any such metal items in a container on the table.
8. In some cases, students or visitors might have legitimate health concerns or physical disabilities (such as a pacemaker, wheelchair, pregnancy or medical surgical devices) that prevent them from passing through a security enhancement device.
 - a. In such instances, alternative screening protocols may be used to accommodate these individuals. For example, the use of a handheld metal detector/wand is an acceptable alternative screening method. These wands can be used to detect any metal objects on the student's or visitor's person, and the student or visitor must be screened by a trained school official to ensure their privacy and dignity.
 - b. To use alternative screening protocols on a regular basis, students must provide appropriate documentation of their legitimate health concerns and/or disability, which shall be maintained in the student's record. This documentation can include a doctor's note or statement from a parent/guardian explaining the student's condition. Designated school officials operating the entry process will have a clear understanding of which students have been approved for such alternative screenings and also, have an up-to-date list of students with legitimate health concerns, who are approved for alternative screening, in a readily accessible, but secure, location for school officials to reference. This information will be provided by the Principal.
9. If the alarm sounds when a student or visitor passes through the security enhancement device, they should be asked again to check their person or any belongings (*e.g.*, backpack or coat) for any metal items. They then must be rescreened.
 - a. Students:
 - 1) If the alarm sounds a second time, the student will be screened with a hand-held security wand. If the wand's security alarm is also triggered, the student must be escorted to a place of privacy (*e.g.*, another room, or around the corner away from the screening process) where a search of their person or belongings (*e.g.*, backpack or coat) may be conducted by the School Principal, Assistant Principal or Safety and Security Assistant. This search must be done by a school official of the same gender with which the student identifies, and in the presence of a third party. To the extent practicable, the third party should also be the same gender. If

questions arise as to the type of search that the school officials should conduct, the school officials must contact the Director of Safety and Security Services. ***Under no circumstances may a strip search be conducted by a school official.*** Any search that requires the school official to make direct contact with the student's body (skin) is prohibited.

- a) Students should never be allowed to enter the secure area of the building until they can walk through the screening device without sounding the alarm or some form of secondary screening using a hand-held wand that can identify the item causing the alarm to sound.

b. Visitors:

- 1) If the alarm sounds a second time for a visitor, they will be screened with a security wand. If the security wand alarm is also triggered, the visitor must be escorted off the school property or Safety and Security Services personnel may be contacted, unless the visitor agrees to a search of their bag, backpack, purse or person.

c. Law Enforcement and Other First Responders Notification:

- 1) As part of PGCPs security enhancement protocols, it is essential to have clear guidelines for police notification upon their entry on school property. Specifically, law enforcement personnel and government agency officials, if armed with a firearm, must promptly identify themselves, inform PGCPs security staff or a member of the school administrative team of their presence, and indicate their duty status. This notification process is crucial for maintaining a secure and well-informed environment within our school premises.
 - 2) These individuals must the school principal or PGCPs security staff of their status/reason for their visit (parental visit, official police business, on-duty or off-duty).
 - 3) If the school Principal or PGCPs security staff have safety or other legitimate concerns, they may require the law enforcement officer or government agency official to leave the premises and secure their firearm(s) off premises before returning.
10. If a visitor is discovered with a weapon or other contraband, call 911. If a student is discovered with a weapon or other contraband, Safety and Security Services personnel and the School Resource Officer must be notified immediately. The student must be detained, and parents/guardians must be notified immediately. (Refer to AP 10101)

11. Modified Student Screenings

Students entering the school or school-related functions are subject to screening, although those school officials conducting the screening may choose to limit the screening by any lawful random formula. For example, if the lines become too long, the screening may be limited to every second or third student. Once a modified formula is utilized, it shall be applied without deviation until it is no longer needed. A modified formula shall not be used to screen a particular student.

12. Contraband

- a. The screening is intended to be a screening for weapons; however, other contraband discovered in the course of a screening may also be removed from a student or visitor.
- b. All property removed from the student or visitor as a result of the above procedures that may be legitimately brought on school premises or to school functions will be returned to the student or visitor. All other property will not be returned. A building administrator, in consultation with Safety and Security staff, will determine whether the property should be returned to the student or visitor.
- c. Property removed from the student or student's bag, coat or parcels, possession of which is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, Board policies or Superintendent's administrative procedures, and/or the law, shall cause a student to be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and may subject the student to criminal prosecution and/or juvenile proceedings for violations of law.
- d. Nothing in the procedures above shall limit the authority of the Board and Board employees to remove other contraband from a student when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a particular student is in possession of an article or thing, the possession of which constitutes inappropriate behavior under the Student Code of Conduct.

D. Refusal to Cooperate

1. Student Who Refuses to Comply with Screening Process

- a. The School Principal/designee will initially discuss with the student the reasons behind the screening program.
- b. If the student still refuses to cooperate, their parent/guardian will be contacted to discuss the security enhancement procedure.

- c. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the student's emergency contact will be called.
 - d. Where appropriate, the School Principal may, with students and/or parents' agreement substitute the use of a wand for the walk-through scans.
 - e. The parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified that if the student fails to comply, they will not be admitted to school.
 - f. Students still refusing to cooperate with the scanning procedure or baggage inspection prior to entry into a school building will be denied entry to the secure part of the building by the School Principal/designee until such time as they choose to comply. If they continue to refuse to comply, the School Principal/designee shall contact their Instructional Director/Supervisor and the Director of Safety and Security Services/designee. Consequences consistent with the Student Code of Conduct may be imposed. Such students will be marked as an unexcused absence and, after ten (10) unexcused absences, will be referred to truancy court on an expedited basis.
 - g. A student who declines to be scanned at an extracurricular activity or athletic contest, or an optional program, will be denied entry.
 - h. A student who declines to go through a walkthrough security enhancement device due to pregnancy will be given the option of being screened by a hand-held scanner or a manual pat-down (but with no direct contact with the student's skin). To the extent practicable, the school official and third party shall be the same sex as the student or with that which the student identifies.
2. Visitor Who Refuses to Comply with the Screening Process
- a. Visitors who refuse to cooperate with school officials will be denied entry to school property.
 - b. A visitor who declines to be scanned at an extracurricular activity or athletic contest, or an optional program, will be denied entry.

VI. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE:

- A. The School Principal/designee is responsible for monitoring and enforcement of guidelines relative to security enhancement screening procedures, as well as recording the number and type of weapons recovered through the security enhancement screening process.
- B. The Office of Safety and Security Services shall provide hands-on training to all

school officials.

The Office of Safety and Security Services shall provide comprehensive, hands-on training to all designated school officials, who are responsible for participating in the operation of security enhancement devices. This training will ensure that personnel understand the proper procedures, safety protocols, and operational functions associated with the equipment. The goal is to ensure consistency, efficiency, and respect for student and visitor dignity during the screening process, while also maintaining a safe and secure school environment.

VII. RELATED ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND OTHER RESOURCES:

Board Policy 2804 – Search and Seizure
Administrative Procedure 2804.3 – Safety and Security with Regard to Use of Exterior Doors

VIII. LEGAL REFERENCE:

Title 18 USCS Chapter 44, §§ 926B and C (Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004, as amended)
Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 7-308

IX. MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THIS ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE:

The Office of Safety and Security Services is responsible for updating this administrative procedure.

X. CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES: There are no cancellations or superseded. This is a new administrative procedure.

XI. EFFECTIVE DATE: August 20, 2025