

Mechanicsburg Area School District

Drug Free School Enforcement

As a proactive step to promote a drug-free school environment, the Mechanicsburg Area School District will begin school-wide random drug sweeps in our middle and high schools. These proactive practices are currently used in schools throughout the area in order to promote a safe and drug-free school environment.

The sweep may be conducted in hallways, lockers, parking lots and other common areas by trained drug detection dogs (canines). It is important to understand that a drug sweep is a search of school premises and not of individual students. The sweeps will be initiated this school year and will continue into future years.

During the sweep, students will stay in their assigned classroom and instruction will continue. Students and staff will have no direct contact with the canine unit. Trained canine handlers will conduct the sweep focusing on hallways, lockers, parking lots, and other common areas. If the canine alerts to a locker or vehicle, the item will be secured and subsequently searched by school officials. In the case of an alert on a hall locker, several lockers must be secured due to their proximity to the subject locker and all lockers will be searched. School officials will contact the parents of all students whose lockers were searched regardless if any prohibited item is found.

Please take a moment to speak with your child about the importance of promoting a safe and drug-free school environment. Remind them that they are responsible for the contents of their locker and encourage them to immediately report any suspicious activity or concerns to an administrator or teacher.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Are dogs going to be used to check individual students?

A. Dogs are used to sweep school facilities and not individuals. Students will be kept in class during the process.

Q. Why are dogs being used?

A. To promote a safe and drug-free school.

Q. What happens if the dog alerts on a locker, vehicle, etc.?

A. The locker, vehicle or other item will be secured until a search is conducted by school officials.

Q. How often will sweeps be conducted?

A. There is no set number of sweeps determined. Dates and times for random sweeps will be determined by the administration.

Q. What happens to visitors or students who enter the building when a sweep is occurring?

A. They are checked in at the school office and wait for directions from school personnel.

Q. What happens if I have an appointment and must leave the building while a sweep is occurring?

A. After the dog(s) sweep the area where your classroom is located you will be escorted to check out in the school office.

Q. What kind of drugs will the dogs alert on?

A. Dogs are trained to alert on a wide variety of controlled substances.

Q. Will local law enforcement be involved?

A. If a search reveals a violation of state or federal law notification will be made to the local police department.

Q. Should student fear the dog?

A. There will be no direct contact between students and dogs. The dog is handled by a specially trained handler.

Q. What about students who have allergies to dogs?

A. There will be no contact between the dog and the students.

Q. How long will it take?

A. Sweeps generally take about one to two class periods to conduct but this may vary depending on the area to be checked and the number of available dogs.

Q. How will kids know a sweep will occur?

A. Sweeps are not announced in advance. Students are informed annually that sweeps may occur at any time throughout the school year.

Q. What can I do as a parent?

A. Discuss with your children the necessity for the school to provide a safe and drug-free environment for all students. Remind your children that they are responsible for the contents of their locker and encourage them to immediately report any suspicious activity or concerns to an administrator or teacher.