



Use of Metal Detectors

(July 2025)

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of portable metal detectors in LEAD Public Schools to enhance safety while ensuring fairness, respect for student rights, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Scope

This policy applies to all schools within the LEAD Public Schools network, covering students, staff, and visitors entering school premises or attending school events, including athletic games and other activities. Portable metal detectors may be deployed at school entrances or event venues as determined by school leadership.

Definitions

- **Portable Metal Detectors:** Lightweight devices used to detect metal objects, which can be relocated across school facilities as needed.
- **School Premises:** All buildings, grounds, and facilities owned, leased, or operated by LEAD Public Schools.
- **School Personnel:** Employees or contracted staff trained to operate metal detectors, including security officers, administrators, or designated staff.
- **Screening:** The process of using metal detectors to check individuals for prohibited items, such as weapons.
- **Prohibited Items:** Items banned under Tennessee law (e.g., T.C.A. § 39-17-1309) or LEAD disciplinary guidelines, including firearms, knives, and other weapons.
- **Contraband:** Any item prohibited by school policy, including drugs, alcohol, or other materials outlined in LEAD Student Handbooks.

Policy

LEAD Public Schools is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment. Metal detectors will be used to screen all individuals entering school premises or attending school events to prevent weapons and other prohibited items from entering. Screenings will be conducted consistently, non-discriminatorily, and in compliance with Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-6-4204, MNPS policies, Tennessee Public Charter School Commission regulations, LEAD disciplinary guidelines, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and any other applicable state and federal laws.



Procedures

1. Notification and Prohibited Items

- **Prior Notification:** Before implementing metal detector screenings, schools will notify students, families, and staff through:
 - LEAD Student Handbooks, distributed at the start of the school year.
 - School website updates and newsletters.
 - Parent meetings or informational sessions.
 - Clear signage at school and event entrances, specifying that metal detectors are in use and listing prohibited items.
- **Prohibited Items List:** The following items are prohibited and may not be brought through metal detectors:
 - Firearms, knives, or other weapons (per T.C.A. § 39-17-1309).
 - Explosives or incendiary devices.
 - Drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances (per LEAD Student Handbook).
 - Any item deemed disruptive or dangerous under LEAD disciplinary guidelines.
- **Permitted Items:** Common items such as keys, phones, metal water bottles, laptop computers/tablets, and small metal accessories are allowed but should be removed and placed in designated trays during screening to avoid triggering detectors.

2. Deployment of Portable Metal Detectors

- **Usage Determination:** School principals or LEAD network leadership will decide when and where to deploy portable metal detectors based on:
 - Safety concerns or recent incidents (e.g., threats, weapons found on campus).
 - The reasonable suspicion that a violation of school rules has occurred and a search is required to identify the violation.
 - Large gatherings, such as athletic events, assemblies, or other school activities.
 - Recommendations from school security officers or law enforcement.
 - The implementation of routine safety and security procedures.
- **Location Flexibility:** Portable metal detectors may be placed at main entrances, secondary entrances, or event venues and can be relocated as needed to address specific safety concerns.
- **Event-Specific Screenings:** For school events (e.g., sports games, performances), metal detectors may be used at entry points. Clear signage will be posted, and non-LEAD attendees (e.g., visiting teams, spectators) will be informed of the screening policy via event announcements and signage stating: "All individuals are subject to metal detector screening. Prohibited items include weapons, drugs, and other items listed in the LEAD Student Handbook."



3. Training and Staffing

- **Training:** School personnel operating metal detectors must complete training on:
 - Proper operation, calibration, and maintenance of metal detectors.
 - Non-discriminatory screening practices to prevent bias based on race, gender, or other protected characteristics.
 - De-escalation techniques and conflict resolution.
 - Procedures for handling alerts, prohibited items, and contraband.
- **Staffing:** Screenings will be conducted by at least two trained personnel (e.g., security officers, administrators) to ensure accountability. For secondary screenings involving wands or pat-downs, the staff member conducting the screening should, whenever possible, be the same gender as the individual being screened.

4. Screening Process

- **Universal Application:** All students, staff, and visitors entering school premises or events must pass through metal detector screenings, except those with approved accommodations (e.g., for disabilities or medical devices). Targeting specific individuals for screening is prohibited unless based on reasonable suspicion of possessing contraband, as permitted under LEAD policies.
- **Procedure:**
 1. Individuals will remove outerwear, bags, and metal objects (e.g., keys, phones) and place them in designated trays for inspection.
 2. School personnel will oversee as the individual passes through the metal detector.
 3. If the detector alerts:
 - The individual will be asked to remove any additional metal items and pass through the detector again.
 - If the detector alerts a second time, the individual will be directed to a private secondary screening area.
 - Secondary screening will be conducted by trained security personnel or an administrator, using a handheld wand or, if necessary, a pat-down by a same-gender staff member (when possible) with a witness present.
 4. Bags and other items may be manually inspected if they trigger the detector or based on reasonable suspicion.
- **Refusal to Screen:** Individuals who refuse to pass through the metal detector will be denied entry to the school or event unless they have an approved accommodation. Students refusing screening will be subject to LEAD disciplinary procedures and may not enter school premises.



5. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities or Medical Conditions

- **Medical Devices:** Students with disabilities or medical conditions requiring wearable devices (e.g., pacemakers, insulin pumps) that may trigger metal detectors may request an alternative screening method (e.g., manual inspection) with prior documentation from a medical professional.
- **Individualized Plans:** Accommodations will be documented in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan, if applicable, to ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- **Process:** Students with accommodations will be screened privately by trained personnel using alternative methods, such as visual inspections or non-metal-detecting procedures, to ensure safety without compromising dignity.

6. Handling Prohibited Items and Contraband

- **Weapons or Prohibited Items:** If a weapon or prohibited item is found:
 1. The item will be confiscated and secured by trained personnel.
 2. The individual will be escorted to a private area by security personnel or an administrator.
 3. The school principal and/or security guard will be notified immediately.
 4. Disciplinary action will follow LEAD disciplinary guidelines and zero-tolerance policies for weapons, as outlined in LEAD Student Handbooks, and may include suspension, expulsion, or law enforcement involvement (per T.C.A. § 39-17-1309).
- **Other Contraband:** If non-weapon contraband (e.g., drugs, alcohol) is found during screening or based on reasonable suspicion:
 1. The item will be confiscated and secured.
 2. Disciplinary action will follow LEAD disciplinary guidelines, which may include parent notification, suspension, or other consequences.
 3. Nothing in this policy limits school personnel's authority to confiscate contraband based on reasonable suspicion, as permitted under Tennessee law and LEAD policies.
- **Documentation:** All incidents involving prohibited items or contraband will be documented, including the date, time, individuals involved, items confiscated, and actions taken. Reports will be submitted to the school principal and LEAD network leadership.



7. Privacy and Non-Discrimination

- Screenings will be conducted respectfully, with minimal physical contact and in a manner that protects privacy.
- All individuals will be screened uniformly, without targeting based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or other protected characteristics.

8. Parental and Community Engagement

- **Communication:** Schools will inform parents and guardians of the metal detector policy and event-specific screenings through LEAD Student Handbooks, newsletters, school website, and parent meetings.
- **Signage for Events:** For school events, clear signage will be posted at entrances stating: “All individuals are subject to metal detector screening. Prohibited items include weapons, drugs, and other items listed in the LEAD Student Handbook.”
- **Feedback:** Schools will provide opportunities for parents to offer feedback through surveys, school board meetings, or direct communication with administrators.

9. Maintenance and Accountability

- **Equipment Maintenance:** Metal detectors will be inspected and calibrated regularly per manufacturer guidelines to ensure proper functionality.
- **Policy Review:** This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with laws and best practices.

Tennessee Department of Education Policy Reference

Public Chapter 244 (*Enacted July 1, 2025*)

Searches and Seizures

- Searches and seizures of student and visitor property may now only be conducted by a school resource officer, school security officer, or an administrator that has received training related searches.
- Parents or guardians of students under 18 that have been subject to a search must be notified within a reasonable time of the search being conducted.
- The Tennessee Department of Education is responsible for establishing an orientation and training program related to searches, and we will pass along any information the department provides related to this training.