

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## HANDOUT 2: Legal and Illegal Searches in School

In this activity you will read about three significant court cases that deal with the issue of students' expectation of privacy vs. the right of school officials and police to conduct searches of lockers, backpacks, bags and clothing.

High school students commonly expect that lockers, bags, backpacks and clothing are private areas that should be free from such searches but recognize that in maintaining safety it is not uncommon to have such items searched under reasonable grounds. However, it is not entirely clear to many students when such searches are lawful and when they are a direct violation of privacy rights.

This activity will help to sort out the law from fiction and allow you to express your viewpoint on the right to privacy in high school.

Steps:

1. Read the cases on *Handout 1: Case Studies and Charter Rights* and highlight key points on privacy, the legal interpretation of a search, the distinction between police powers to search and those given to school officials and the implication of searching bags, lockers, backpacks or clothing.
2. Write out a brief summary of the ruling given in each of the three cases. Who won, why, what distinctions were drawn and what are the implications of the ruling for high schools, administrators, students and the police.
3. You are a newly-elected member of the local school board (board of school trustees) and have been assigned the task of writing a brief policy summary of student privacy and locker/backpack/bag searches for all of the local high schools. The summary will be reprinted in the agenda books of every high school in the district and a copy sent home to parents so that all parties are clear on the policy. The policy must be typewritten, one paragraph in length and precise in its wording to avoid misinterpretation.
4. As an optional extension activity you will present your policy to one of the school administrators (Principal or Vice-Principal) and ask them to comment on its potential use as an actual school policy. If possible, have an administrator, school official or trustee speak to the class about the balance between students' right to privacy and the school's expectation of a safe, drug and weapon free environment.