

YES to the TEST

**parents for
drug-free
schools**



About the Drug Free Schools Program

To promote the safety and health of our students, the Mobile County Public School System conducts random drug tests in all 12 of its high schools as part of its Drug Free Schools Program.

The purpose of the Drug Free Schools Program is not to penalize students who are found to be using drugs, but rather to prevent them from using in the first place.

Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions regarding the random drug testing.

Q: Which students can be tested?

A: Students – in grades 9 through 12 – who participate in extra-curricular activities, drive or park on campus, or whose parent or guardian volunteers them. By definition, these include:

- Activity students, which are students who participate in any board-sponsored school related extra-curricular activity during or after school.
- Parking students, which include students who operate or park a motor vehicle on campus.
- Volunteer students who have been added to the random pool with the consent of a parent or guardian.

Q: Why are these students tested?

A: Participation in extra-curricular activities or operating/parking a motor vehicle on campus is a privilege, not a right.

Students in these activities represent the school and the school system in interscholastic competition, public performances and various other activities. These students are often role models for others, meaning their choices are likely to influence others. Further, the abuse of alcohol and/or illegal drugs by these students could increase the likelihood of injuries to self and others.

In addition, student drivers are inexperienced and pose a substantial risk to the safety of themselves and others should they operate a motor vehicle on campus or elsewhere while under the influence.

Q: Is drug use among teenagers a problem in Mobile County?

A: Although the state's Pride Survey shows that our students use alcohol and drugs below state and national norms, it remains a significant problem here. About 54 percent of Mobile County's high school students indicated in that survey they have used alcohol, and another 27 percent said they have smoked marijuana. Local law enforcement and health officials have expressed concerns over the effects alcohol and drug use have on students.

Q: Why is the Mobile County school system doing this?

A: The Mobile County Board of School Commissioners expects all students to remain alcohol and drug free. Drug use interferes with a student's education, which is the primary goal of the school system. Even small quantities of alcohol, illegal drugs or abused prescription drugs can impair judgment and reflexes, which can create unsafe conditions for students. Also, students who use prohibited substances are a threat to other students and themselves and can make errors resulting in injuries.

Q: Which schools are participating?

A: All 12 Mobile County public high schools.

Q: How often will the tests be done?

A: At least once per month at each school, a random selection of students identified from the list of activity, parking and volunteer students will be tested. Each student on the list has the possibility to be randomly selected for each test.

Q: What if a student refuses to take the test?

A: His or her parents will be notified immediately, and that student will lose extra-curricular as well as driving and parking privileges for 365 days. No disciplinary action will be taken.

Q: Who performs the test? And who gets the results?

A: Infirmary Industrial Medical Clinic conducts the tests. All documentation of the testing and the results are confidential and will be known only by the parents, student, Infirmary, the Drug Free Program's liaison and the school's administrator.

Q: How will the tests be conducted?

A: Selected students will be escorted from their classrooms to the testing area at the school. Each student will privately submit a urine sample. If drugs are detected, the same urine sample will be tested in a laboratory for further evaluation. If the specimen is negative, no additional testing is required.

Q: What happens if a student tests positive for drugs?

A: If drugs are detected, a second and more elaborate test will be performed from the same urine sample. A physician specializing in drug testing will call the parent and take a medical history of the student to determine if there is a medical reason for the test results.

If the second test confirms drug use and the doctor determines there is no medical justification, a conference will be held at the school with the parent, student and school administrator. An intervention program involving community agencies has been established to offer the student and his or her family opportunities for interventions related to the student's drug use.

Consequences for confirmed drug use include completing an intervention program, restriction from parking on campus, and restriction from participation in extra-curricular activities.

About the Drug Free Schools Program

This effort is supported by the Mobile County Student Drug Testing Committee, which consists of educators as well as representatives of law enforcement agencies, health professionals and other community members.

The Drug Free Program's liaison is Larry Mouton, who is Executive Director of Career and Technical Education for Mobile County Public Schools.

Please complete the form on the following page and present it to your high school official