



4 December, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Re: Drug Testing in Secondary

Since 2014, Chatsworth has taken proactive measures to support our Secondary students who may come under pressure to use illegal drugs by conducting random drug testing. For this academic year, we are continuing random drug testing for several reasons:

1. **Random drug testing serves as a deterrent, and gives our students a reason to resist peer pressure to take drugs.** Most students want to say no to drugs, but may need something to say in the moment that gives them an out. If offered drugs, students can now say, "No, I cannot. My school tests for drugs".
2. **Random drug testing discourages students from using drugs while abroad during school holidays.** Some students take more risks while overseas (especially in countries where drug laws differ to those in Singapore), thinking the consequences are not as high as getting caught in Singapore. Since drugs can stay in a person's system for up to four months, this may discourage drug use during holidays.
3. **Random drug testing can identify students who have started using drugs, so that interventions can occur early.** Depending on the situation, we may be able to intervene at an early stage if the student comes forward for help prior to being tested.
4. **Random drug testing detracts drug users from other international schools from applying to our school.** We do not want to be in the minority of international schools who do not drug test, and attract students hoping to avoid getting caught.
5. **Our Pastoral and PHE Program educates students about the dangers of drug use. Random drug testing supports this endeavour.** Our students will know that we are not just providing information, but also putting support systems in place to deter students from using drugs, and taking disciplinary action against those who do.

Attached is our Drug Policy, some commonly asked questions and answers about drug testing.

Many of us have come from schools that conduct random drug testing and have seen the positive impact this has on students. We hope that you support us in this initiative.

Kind regards,

Tyler Sherwood
Head of Schools

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Chatsworth International School

Illegal Drug/Substance Abuse Policy

Policy

At Chatsworth, we take a proactive approach toward preventing illegal drug use amongst our students. We educate our students on the harmful effects of drugs and inform them on the strict consequences for those who violate the policy through the unlawful use, possession, buying or selling, giving, or trafficking of illegal or prescription drugs, or inappropriate use of harmful substances. This includes assisting, facilitating, or encouraging students or others in the use, purchase, or sale of illegal drugs, or misuse of non-prescription drugs.

Procedures

Step One: Intervention

1. In our Pastoral Program we routinely educate students on the harmful effects of drugs and the consequences of illegal drug use in Singapore.
2. We conduct random drug tests on students. This serves as a deterrent to the use of illegal drugs and also provides students with a reason to turn down drugs.
3. We investigate any situation in which a student is suspected of drug use.
4. We provide an opportunity for a student who has a drug problem to voluntarily come forward for help, but only *before* he or she has been selected for drug testing. Students receiving support to overcome a drug problem will be routinely tested throughout their continued enrollment at Chatsworth.
5. Students admitted on a probationary contract are or may be enrolled in routine drug testing.
6. Students who are internally placed on probation may also be selected for drug testing.

Step Two: Discipline

1. Any student who is suspected of being in violation of this policy shall be immediately suspended from Chatsworth pending an investigation.
2. Students under investigation by the Singapore authorities for suspected drug use will automatically be suspended.
3. If it is determined after investigation that the student is confirmed to be in breach of the drug policy, the student will be expelled immediately.
4. Students who are expelled due to breach of our drug policy will have it recorded on their permanent academic record.



Drug Testing Questions and Answers

1. What method do you use for drug testing?

This testing is overseen by our Head of Secondary School, and is undertaken by our School Nurse. On the day of the testing, the school nurse will meet with each student individually and obtain a hair sample. A strand of hair is normally cut from the head, but it can be obtained from other places on the body if the hair is too short or shaven. Fingernail samples can also be taken. The hair sample is double sealed and sent to a laboratory in the US. For some cases, we may refer the student to a local doctor for urine tests.

2. What laboratory do you use to get your results?

We use US-Psychemedics. Psychemedics Corporation is a United States corporation which provides patented, FDA-cleared, CAP certified clinical laboratory services for the detection of drugs of abuse.

3. Who will pay for the costs of the testing?

The costs of random drug testing will be borne by the school. In the cases of probationary students, or repeat tests, costs are borne by the parents at a cost of S\$150 per test.

4. Will the laboratory know my child's name?

No, each student will be assigned a tracking number by our school nurse, and the laboratory will use this number instead of a name.

5. Will any drug tests you conduct be non-random?

We may conduct a non-random test on a student who shows signs or where there are concerns of possible drug use.

6. What are the signs of possible drug use?

It is difficult to produce an exhaustive list and each case might have varying circumstances. However, signs might include: significant change in attitude or mood, possible sleep issues, a significant drop in grades, aggression, or an increase in at-risk behaviour.



7. Can a parent request to have his or her child drug tested?

Yes, some parents like drug testing as an assurance that their child is drug free. Cost of these tests will be borne by the parents, and positive results would likely be supported by intervention methods.

8. What if my child takes prescription drugs? Will this show up in the test?

Yes, this may show up. All parents are required to inform our school nurse if their child is taking prescription medication. In turn, the school nurse will inform the laboratory, so that they can take this into account when determining their results.

9. When do the results come back from the lab?

It normally takes about two weeks to get the results from the lab.

10. Who will know about the results within the school?

Results will be kept confidential and shared only with the Head of Schools, the Head of Secondary School, Dean of Students, the Head of Student Services, and our School Nurse.

11. Are you obligated to report positive results to the Singapore authorities?

We are not required to offer the results to the Singapore authorities. If for some reason, they request the results from us, for example due to a separate investigation they may be conducting, we would comply and provide them with the results. However, we are not obligated to report our results unsolicited.

12. How will you inform parents of the testing and of the results?

We will send a letter to parents / local guardians on the day of the test itself, informing them that their child has been tested. If the results are negative, parents will receive a follow-up letter stating this result. If the results are positive, parents will be informed in a meeting to discuss next steps.

13. How many times a year will you test students?

We will conduct random drug testing several times a year. Non-random drug testing may occur as and when needed.

14. What if I refuse to sign the permission form?

The school reserves the right to refuse to offer a further student contract with the school if parents do not sign the permission form.



15. What if my child refuses to be tested upon selection?

Refusal to take a drug test may be considered an admission of guilt. This student may be treated in the same way as a student who had had a positive result.

16. What if my child has used drugs before this announcement of random drug testing?

For our first semester of the 2019-2020 school year, we will begin in November, so as to provide any student who has recently used drugs enough time to test drug free and get any illegal drugs out of their system. We are informing students and parents of this new program now, at an early stage, so that if necessary, steps can be taken.

17. What if someone has slipped something into my child's drink and that appears in a drug test?

Slipping drugs into someone's drink is illegal, and very dangerous. Such an action should be reported by parents to the Singapore police immediately, along with an examination by a doctor. Police reports and medical records would be required to support such a claim.

18. If my child attended a party where others were smoking drugs, would the test pick up smoke residue from his or her hair?

This is not likely, as drugs need to be orally ingested to be detected by a hair test. However, a student who is in a place where others are smoking drugs is advised to leave immediately, as there are other possible consequences. For example, the police could raid the establishment and assume he or she is guilty by association.

19. What if my child tests positive?

A positive result will be addressed by Step Two: Discipline of our Drug Policy.

20. What programs are in place if a student comes forward wanting to stop using drugs?

We provide an opportunity for a student who has used illegal drugs to voluntarily come forward for assistance, but only *before* he or she has been selected for drug testing. Students receiving support with illegal drug use will be routinely tested throughout their continued enrollment at Chatsworth at their parent's expense.