

WEST DEPTFORD HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

The Board of Education has created a Random Drug Testing Policy, #5536. The purpose of this letter is to explain that policy and the procedures that go along with it so that you and your student(s) understand how it will be applied during the school year. The goal of this policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of a large segment of our student population. The policy states:

“Participation in athletics, extracurricular activities and parking on campus is a privilege. Student participants, by virtue of their voluntary decision to participate in these activities, and because of their position as school leaders and role models in the school community have a heightened responsibility to be drug and alcohol free. The District is committed to being proactive in ensuring the safety of all students participating in athletics, extracurricular activities and parking.”

The high school administration believes that this policy will give those students who choose to participate in the above named activities another good reason to say no in the face of mounting peer pressure and other temptations. While we are concerned about the safety and well-being of all of our students, current state law and court rulings only give schools the right to use random drug testing for students who voluntarily participate in activities or park on campus. Additionally, parents may request that their student be added to the testing pool, and those students are also then subject to the policy. The goal of this policy is not punitive, as the following excerpt from the policy makes clear,

“The primary emphasis in administering this program shall be directed toward deterrence and remediation rather than punishment of students who test positive for alcohol or drugs or their metabolites. Consequences for a student who tests positive shall be in accordance with this policy. This policy is NOT intended to be disciplinary or punitive in nature. No student shall be expelled or suspended from school as a sole result of any verified positive test conducted under the Random Alcohol and Drug Testing Program.”

Included in this mailing is a universal consent form to be filled out and signed by the student and their parent/guardian once during the school year if the student intends to participate in any sport, extracurricular activity, or will request a parking permit. Once this form is completed and returned to the school, the student may participate in any of the activities for which he/she is eligible. If the student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) refuses to provide written consent to be tested, the student will be denied participation in the extracurricular activity and/or will be denied the privilege of parking on campus. For those students who submit the form, their student ID number is entered into a testing pool, and they may be selected randomly to submit a sample on site for the purpose of urine drug screening. This sample would be labeled with their student number and the results from that sample would be reported by the testing agency using that number. If the results are negative the student's ID number is just re-entered into the pool. If the student tests positive, the ID number is reported directly to the appropriate administrator, and then the following would take place. The parent/guardian will be contacted by the school nurse, who will work with the parents to set up a mandatory medical exam. The student will be suspended from their sport, activity or from their parking privilege for 15 days, and will be permitted to return only if the following criteria are met:

- In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-12 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-4.3, the student must be evaluated by a physician before returning to school and a written report must be furnished to the District certifying that the substance does not interfere with the student's mental and physical ability to participate in school.

The mission of the West Deptford Public Schools, valuing our tradition of excellence, is to develop well rounded, motivated, 21st century thinkers. As a result, learners will transition from competent students to productive and responsible citizens.

- The student shall have a minimum of three (3) sessions with the Student Assistance Counselor, two of which must occur within the two weeks immediately following the confirmed positive test. The SAC will inform the principal or designee if the student is non-compliant. Non-compliant students will remain suspended from their activity.
- Upon their return students may be subjected to weekly random screenings. A positive test result would then count as a second positive.

Students who test positive a second time would be suspended from all sports and activities for one calendar year from the date of the second positive test result. A third positive test would result in a ban from all sports and activities for the remainder of the student's high school career.

As previously stated, the purpose of this policy is to safeguard a large segment of our population and to encourage them to stay drug and alcohol free. It is not punitive in nature, but instead is viewed as another avenue of intervention and prevention. In the face of mounting peer pressure our students need many good reasons to say no as we strive to keep our students drug and alcohol free. Should you have any questions about this policy or our procedures, please do not hesitate to contact our school.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Gismondi, Ed.D
Principal