

Norfolk Catholic Universal and Random Drug Testing Frequently Asked Questions

We have created this document to answer typical questions about NC's universal and random drug-testing program. All of the processes described herein are subject to change.

1. Why has Norfolk Catholic decided to test its students for drug use?

Our decision to implement universal and random testing of students for illegal drug use stems from a deep concern for their health and welfare and a strong desire to protect them from potentially self-destructive behavior. Such testing will arm students with an acceptable "out" to resist peer pressure to use drugs: "I can't take drugs; my school tests for substance use, and my parents will find out." While we would all like our children to be strong enough to say no, we know that they need help with decision-making during their teenage years. Study after study reveals that the longer a young person avoids even casual substance use, the less likely it is that he or she will face abuse problems later in life. Our culture sends mixed messages to teenagers about drugs, particularly marijuana and alcohol. This program's primary objective is to underscore the harmful effects of substance use on teenagers and to prevent use among NC students.

2. Does Norfolk Catholic have a drug problem?

America has a drug problem, and its effects are felt on all school campuses--public, private, and parochial. Past surveys of NC students have consistently shown that the majority of our students make healthy choices and do not have problems with alcohol or other drugs; nevertheless, these surveys do indicate experimentation among our students. Even a small percentage of users is too many. Knowing the immediate and long-term effects of substance abuse on learning, adolescent brain development, and health and safety overall, as well as the detrimental effects on student morale generally, we have taken this step to minimize experimentation and use as much as possible. Many schools have moved to random testing in the wake of a student tragedy. We are fortunately positioned to take this step from a preventive, not reactive, posture.

3. Is universal and random testing part of NC's disciplinary program?

No. Testing Norfolk Catholic students for illegal drug use is a health-and-safety initiative, not a disciplinary initiative, structured to be impartial and confidential and to limit knowledge of positive test results to Norfolk Catholic's high school administration and counselor. The goal is to identify substance-use problems privately and proactively, in partnership with parents, and remedy them professionally. The goal is wellness for Norfolk Catholic students.

4. When will this program go into effect?

Required hair tests of all NC students in grades 10-12--hence the descriptor "universal"-- will commence in August 2016. Random student drug testing for all students in grades 9-12 will begin in early October 2016 and be conducted monthly through May 2017.

5. How many students will be selected for random testing, and will it actually be random?

Using student-identification numbers, a third party will randomly select students for testing. Norfolk Catholic personnel will not be involved in this random selection process. We anticipate

collecting roughly 8-10 samples each month, meaning that we will administer random hair tests of roughly 40-45% of the NC high school student population between October and May.

6. How will the school respond to a positive result?

The school will classify a first positive test as a health-and-wellness issue. Our school counselor will request a meeting with the student and his or her parents. The students and parents will be given the information gleaned from the analysis of the hair sample. As this is a Health and Wellness program, there will be no disciplinary consequences at this time. The purpose of this initial meeting is to assist the family in seeking any necessary help and interventions. A student's first positive test will not be reflected in his or her permanent Norfolk Catholic record, nor will it affect his or her full participation in academics or extracurricular activities, including fine arts and athletics.

Each student who has received a first positive test result will then be administered another hair test approximately 100 days following the initial positive test and be subject to regular testing throughout the remainder of his or her tenure at Norfolk Catholic.

7. Will college counselors or authorities be notified of positive test results?

No. All information regarding a student's first positive result will be strictly limited to the administration and counselor, who will oversee follow-up testing and all communication with the student and his or her family. As they seek support and help following a positive drug test, the student's parents may share this information with any NC employees of their choosing. The administration nor the counselor will not initiate this communication, however.

8. What drugs will be detected?

Psychemedics will test for 18 different types of drugs under the following classifications: cocaine, opiates, phencyclidine, amphetamines, and marijuana. Please note that tests for synthetic drugs are under development. As soon as they are successfully beta-tested and become available, our testing may include them.

10. What if my child is taking a physician-prescribed drug?

Some prescribed medications, especially various forms of painkillers, will cause positive results. In the event of such a positive result, a third party independent of Norfolk Catholic will contact parents within 48 hours of receiving the results, requesting a copy of the prescription or of the medication bottle, along with the prescribing doctor's contact information, in order to confirm the legitimacy of the prescription. Once confirmed, the test will be considered negative, Norfolk Catholic will not be notified, and no other action will be necessary. If the student does not have a legitimate prescription, NC will be notified of the positive test.

11. What if my child is near someone else who smokes marijuana? Will he or she register positive for drug use?

No. Psychemedics testing is carefully calibrated and will not produce a positive test result for exposure to air contamination. Students are best advised, though, to avoid situations where others are abusing drugs.

12. Will this hair test detect alcohol?

It can. Alcohol testing is relatively new and more expensive. It will cost an additional \$80 to run the alcohol test, which can detect alcoholic “binge” drinking. If parents are concerned about their students’ possible alcohol abuse, they may pay for the additional alcohol test. The alcohol test results would be sent directly to the parents, not to the school.

13. May I request a retest if I believe that my child’s positive result is inaccurate?

All positive results are automatically subjected to retesting at Psychemedics before final confirmation and reporting of initial results to the school. If a family requests an additional retest of a new hair sample, it can be performed. Parents may request a second hair sample test within three business days of being told of the initial results. If the requested second test by Psychemedics confirms the positive results again, it will be considered final, and the family will be billed for the retest.

14. How are hair samples taken?

Hair samples are collected in controlled circumstances to assure an absolutely positive chain of custody. The amount of hair (taken near the base) needed for testing is equal to the diameter of lead inside a pencil. Stylists trained by Psychemedics specifically for this program will take samples from an area of the head where it is least likely to be noticed. If a student has too little hair to be taken from the head, hair will be taken from the armpits, legs, or arms. If a student purposely attempts to circumvent the testing in any way, he or she will be subject to required subsequent testing and to disciplinary action, which may include school withdrawal.

15. Will chemically treated hair or typical hair products affect the results?

No. Standard hair products will not significantly affect the results.

16. How reputable is the company that performs the lab tests?

Psychemedics has been considered the leading company in hair drug testing for over 25 years. It is used by Fortune 500 companies, schools, courts, and major police forces. Over 200 secondary schools, as well as colleges and Greek organizations, currently use Psychemedics services due to their unparalleled record of accuracy. Psychemedics' hair test has been upheld in more state and federal courts than those of any other testing lab.

17. Is hair sampling more accurate than urinalysis?

Yes. The primary difference is the wider window of detection with Psychemedics hair testing. Cocaine, methamphetamine, opiates, and PCP are rapidly excreted from the body and usually undetectable in urine 48–72 hours after use. Chronic marijuana use may remain in the body longer. Unlike a body-fluid test, a hair test detects drug use over a period of months, ensuring that a drug user cannot evade the test by simply abstaining for a few days. Hair sampling also eliminates possibilities for substitution or adulteration of samples.

18. Will parents be charged for universal and random testing?

The school’s operating budget will cover the expenses for this testing program; parents will not be billed separately. After a positive test result, however, all costs and expenses of the

substance-use evaluation and counseling and subsequent testing will be the responsibility and obligation of the student's parents and will not be paid by Norfolk Catholic.

19. Where can I get more information?

If you are interested in learning more about teen drug abuse and its dangers, here are some websites and articles you might wish to explore:

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/>

<http://www.drugfree.org/>

<http://www.casacolumbia.org/templates/NewsRoom.aspx?articleid=617&zoneid=51>

<http://www.psychemedics.com/>

<http://fcd.org/>

“This Is Your Brain on Drugs”: <http://nyti.ms/1tCMvGd>

“Casual Marijuana Use Linked to Brain Abnormalities”:

<http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2014/04/casual-marijuana-use-linked-to-brain-abnormalities-in-students.html>

<http://www.nbcnews.com/id/43569095/ns/health-addictions/t/high-schoolers-who-use-drugs-alcohol-cigarettes-are-addicted/#.UXV4JaKR-So>