

Peace Academy School Drug and Alcohol Testing Program

National statistics from Monitoring the Future indicate that 39 percent of all sophomores and 50 percent of all seniors have used illegal drugs. Additionally, 52 percent of sophomores and 68 percent of seniors have used alcohol, including over 20 percent of seniors who report having participated in binge drinking (five or more drinks in a row) in the previous two weeks. Similar results are detailed for Oklahoma through the Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment Survey, a survey in which Peace Academy School students participate (<http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>).

The Center for Disease Control has identified alcohol use by persons under 21 years of age as a major public health problem. Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience social, school and legal problems, car crashes, unintentional injuries, unwanted and unprotected sexual activity, and changes in brain development that may have life-long effects. Youth who start drinking before age 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life than those who begin drinking at or after the age of 21.

In an effort to be proactive rather than reactive in addressing the issue of drug and alcohol abuse by our students, beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, Peace Academy will start conducting drug and/or alcohol testing for all current or transfer students in grades 6-12.

Why is drug testing required at Peace Academy?

Out of concern for our students, Peace Academy administrators and the Board of trustees make every effort to have highly effective safety practices to keep all of our students secure. Some of these efforts include improving campus lighting, installing security fencing, electronic access, using security cameras, drug and alcohol education, and testing.

What are the benefits of testing all students?

Students who choose to use damaging and illegal substances will likely not opt to attend Peace Academy, which makes the campus safer for everyone. The fact that every student is tested gives students the support they may need to decline using illegal substances. Also, teens that use drugs are more likely to engage in other unsafe or illegal activity. We hope to prevent student use of harmful substances.

Are tests confidential?

Yes. Results are stored off campus on a password-protected server with access by the Director, Principal and Vice principal of student affairs. Results are stored by identification numbers; no names are stored with results. The school does not keep on campus records; only the testing company has the results.

Why is hair testing the method chosen to test students for drug use?

Hair testing is the most accurate and non-invasive test available. Schools nation-wide have been using the test since 1997 to help their students stay drug-free. Courts routinely use hair testing in their probation, parole, and diversionary programs. The accuracy of hair testing is well established.

An FDA approved hair test, analyzed by Psychemedics Labs www.psychemedics.com, has been selected for testing at Peace Academy School. Hair analysis provides a several month window to detect drug ingestion and is highly resistant to evasion by adulterating or substituting samples, or by simply abstaining from drug use for a few days.

How much hair is required for a test?

In general, the amount needed is the thickness of a shoelace tip. A standard test of one-and-one-half inches of head hair cut close to the scalp can provide a several month window to detect drug ingestion. If head hair is not available, arm or leg hair can be used as an alternative. Only trained school personnel will obtain hair samples.

Are all samples sent in for analysis?

Absolutely. Parents may request detailed results from the Principal and/or Vice principal of student affairs.

What if a student has a legal prescription for a substance that shows up on the test?

Hair tests can determine levels of substances. If a student has a verifiable prescription and is taking normal amounts of a commonly prescribed substance, there will be no problems with the test.

What is the cost of drug testing?

An annual fee will be paid by the parents/guardian to cover one test for each student and subsequent random tests in an academic year. This cost will be added to the registration fee for all Peace Academy students and all transfer students in grades 6-12. Check with the school office for the updated annual fee.

If a student tests positive and the results are disputed by parents, the test must be requested and taken within seven (7) days of the positive result at the parents/guardians' additional expense.

How often will students be tested?

All Peace Academy students in grades 6-12 will be tested for illegal drugs and/or alcohol at least once during the school year. All transfer students (new or returning student) in grades 6-12 will be tested and have to show negative results before their enrollment to Peace Academy is accepted. A percentage (to be determined by the administration) of these students will be randomly selected for additional testing throughout the year. Once a student is selected for random testing, his/her name goes back into the pool and may be selected again. If a student is randomly selected, no additional charge is incurred for another test.

What drugs are included in a standard test?

The test identifies cocaine, marijuana, opiates (including heroin and oxycodone), methamphetamine, Ecstasy (MDMA), Eve (MDEA), phencyclidine (PCP) and/or alcohol. If a reasonable suspicion exists that a student is abusing or under the influence of another drug, specific tests for that substance may be required.

Does chemical treatment of the hair affect the test results?

Commonly used hair procedures (e.g., shampoos, conditioners, sprays, mousses and gels) have no significant effect on results. In fact, normal hair washing helps to remove external contamination. Normal hair treatments such as bleaching, perming and dyeing generally will not significantly lower the quantitative results.

Does the hair test show use of alcohol?

An approved hair test has been developed by Psychemedics that will detect excessive alcohol use. This test may be utilized for the annual screening or if a student is found or suspected to be under the influence. **A percentage of students will also be selected each year for random alcohol testing.**

What happens if my son or daughter tests positive for excessive alcohol use or the use of illegal drugs on a test?

If a student tests positive for illegal drugs or excessive alcohol use the director, principal and/or vice principal of student affairs will meet with the student and at least one parent or guardian to review the results and the student will be required to withdraw from Peace Academy. Refusal to withdraw will result in expulsion.

Do the screening results appear anywhere on a student's permanent record?

No. Drug and alcohol testing records will not show on the student's report/transcript.

*For more information about Psychemedics Lab and hair testing visit www.psychemedics.com