



## CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

# HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE FAQs

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, Central Catholic's extensive health and wellness counseling and education program will include required random drug testing with the potential of any student being selected at any point throughout the school year. This decision was made after three years of study by the administrative team and with the full support of our Board and the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

We have gathered the most Frequently Asked Questions here.  
For more information, including a link to the policy in full, please visit:  
[www.centralcatholicshs.com/wellness](http://www.centralcatholicshs.com/wellness).

## WHY IS THIS HEALTH AND WELLNESS INITIATIVE BEING IMPLEMENTED?

This initiative is serving our mission to educate and develop boys into men of faith, scholarship and service by proactively seeking to identify and address issues that may hinder or derail the healthy growth, development and maturation expected of the students during their time at CCHS. In addition, and together with other school preventative and educational programs, we determined this initiative was needed to curb illegal drug use, which is both a national and local epidemic.

Through surveys, parent reports, student disclosure, faculty and staff observation and reported incidents we realize we are not immune to these health and safety concerns. Rather than hide and be ashamed, the Central Catholic community will bring these concerns and issues to the light of faith and reason. Pushing the age of first use past the age of 18 years significantly decreases the chance for substance abuse issues, which some of our alumni have heroically fought through.

## FAST FACTS:

- **28.8%** (up nearly 10% from 2015) of Allegheny County 12th graders used marijuana via an electronic/vape device, compared to 18.5% in the rest of the state\*
- **276,000** adolescents in the U.S. between the ages of 12-17 used pain relievers (including opioids) for non-medical reasons in 2016, and **122,000** were addicted to prescription drugs.\*\*
- **Nearly 100%** - The increase in usage of marijuana vaping devices among high school seniors between 2018 and 2019 (7.5% in 2018 vs. 14% in 2019).\*\*\*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION AND A LINK TO THE FULL POLICY:

[www.centralcatholicshs.com/wellness](http://www.centralcatholicshs.com/wellness)

## WAS THE REPUTATION OF CENTRAL CATHOLIC CONSIDERED?

The reputation of Central Catholic was discussed as was our mission. Ultimately, our decision to implement this mandatory program in order to support the health and wellness of our students closely aligns with our mission.

The decision to propose and implement a mandatory random drug testing program as part of the Health and Wellness Initiative was made over a three-year process among administration with the support and feedback of the Board of Directors, school staff, alumni, past and present parents, students and other high school administrators.

## HOW AND WHY WAS THE CURRENT POLICY CHOSEN?

The current policy was chosen through a rigorous three-year process of administrative, legal, best-practice and diocesan counsel coming together to choose the most effective synthesis of substance identification, support and safety for both the school and the students.

## IS THERE A DRUG PROBLEM AT CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL?

Central Catholic uses a few means (self-report surveys, counselors and end of the year statistics) to understand the issues concerning the young men entrusted to our care. These results show that some of our students struggle with illegal drug use. We, as an institution, want to proactively work with our students and families in addressing these concerns.

## WHAT IS THE SCHOOL DOING ABOUT ALCOHOL MISUSE?

We work with our students in multiple ways to educate, prevent and intervene in regard to alcohol misuse. Students are educated with classroom lessons on alcohol, speak with our school counselors and psychologist about their questions and concerns and at times are referred to outside experts.

The counseling center and Lasallian ministry work closely together to build a culture of spiritual and psychological well-being, which includes brotherhood and redemption for our students. We have partnered with young adults in our community who have struggled with alcohol and are serious about recovery. Each year, students partake in a day of reflection with them so that they can make positive connections in regard to navigating alcohol misuse.

## CAN I OPT MY SON OUT OF TESTING?

No. While an opt-out program was considered early in the process, the current policy was deemed best to incorporate at our school. Legally speaking, students are not compelled to attend Central Catholic, as it is a privilege. By accepting admission and agreeing to abide by Central Catholic's policies, which do not run in violation with Federal or Pennsylvania constitutional protections, all students are required to participate in the program.

## DOES THIS POLICY VIOLATE THE STUDENTS' PRIVACY RIGHTS?

No. Many of our students will encounter drug testing at some point in their lives – when they apply for a job or pursue athletics at a higher level. Because of the nature of the test, a hair sample, students do not suffer from the embarrassment of a urine sample. Most importantly, we are doing this for the benefit of our students: to keep them free of illegal substances. This certainty of detection will give them another reason to say “no” to the pressure of using illegal drugs.



Source: \*Center on Addiction

**9** OUT OF **10**

People with substance abuse issues started using by the age of 18.\*



## DOES THIS DRUG TESTING POLICY VIOLATE THE CONSTITUTION?

No. Private schools are permitted to conduct any type of drug testing. In addition, public schools in our area are and have been conducting drug testing based on privilege in the interest of keeping their students substance-free.

## WHAT IF MY SON IS ON PRESCRIBED MEDICATION AND TESTED?

Students and families who are able to provide a prescription for tested substances will not be deemed in violation despite a positive result. Please provide the prescriptions and/or certification to CCHS once you are notified that your son was randomly selected and tested.

## AS A PARENT/GUARDIAN, WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT IN THIS PROCESS?

From the start of the monthly random selection to its close, all students are eligible to be randomly selected. If your son is selected, you will receive a notification via email (at the email on file with CCHS). In addition, your son will receive a letter that he is responsible for bringing to you.

If the result is negative:

- Parent/guardian(s) will be emailed (at the email on file with CCHS) the results of a negative result.

If the result is positive:

- Parent/guardian(s) will receive a phone call. Once contact has been made by the school, the student will be notified of his results.
- We expect parent/guardian(s) to be both supportive and adherent to the requirements of the student, which include:
  - A plan of action set forth, which includes getting appropriate evaluation and providing CCHS with the results and recommendations of that assessment/evaluation.

Please refer to the Mandatory Random Drug Testing Policy for more information and details: [www.centralcatholichs.com/wellness](http://www.centralcatholichs.com/wellness)

## WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY, SCREENING RESULTS AND PERMANENT RECORD?

Hair samples and forms are coded with a unique student ID number (no names), different from the eight digit number the student knows, and given to the testing service. All correspondence including but not limited to emails, letters, memoranda, as well as all drug test results shall be considered confidential information and will be handled by CCHS confidentially. All files pertaining to drug testing will be kept confidential and separate from the student's education records, and only school personnel will have access to the information on a need-to-know basis.

No part of the testing or screening results will go on the student's electronic or permanent record and thus will not be disclosed to any college, potential employer, etc. The counselor will keep records on file for a time of up to one (1) year past the student's graduation date, after which the record will be destroyed.

Information regarding the results of a student's test(s) will not be disclosed to authorities except in accordance with a valid subpoena or other legal process.

## WHAT IF A STUDENT VOLUNTARILY STEPS FORWARD AND ADMITS TO USING AN ILLEGAL DRUG?

Any student who volunteers the use of illegal drugs to a counselor, administrator or other staff member will be offered the appropriate resources. No disciplinary action has ever been or will be taken for a student who freely steps forward to seek help. Students in a treatment program are still eligible to be selected as part of random drug testing.

# 49.4%

of 10th graders in our county believe that of their peers would say it is "very wrong" or "wrong" of them to use marijuana.\*

## WHAT CAN A STUDENT EXPECT WITH RANDOM DRUG TESTING?

1. The student will be called down to the appropriate office at a determined time via a normal means of doing so (i.e. a note from a specific office).
2. The student will have a small snip of hair taken from their head area. The sample will be labeled, the student will verify that it is his hair, and it will be sent off to the vendor for analysis.
3. The student will be handed a letter to give to his parent/guardian(s). Once the samples are tested, the student and his parent/guardian(s) will be informed of the results.
4. If a student tests positive, the Parent/Guardian(s) will be contacted via telephone by CCHS, and after the Parent/Guardian(s) is notified, the student will be notified of his positive test result by a CCHS Official in a private setting. The results will include information about the type of drug(s) used, the level of use and a possible timeline of when the drug was used. Students who receive a positive result will be retested for a period of time outlined in the policy.



## WHAT ABOUT A FALSE POSITIVE?

Hair testing provides the most accurate and reliable results. Students and their families are welcome to request a re-test at their own cost and the risk of getting a second positive result which is outlined in the policy.

## CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT "PLAN OF ACTION" AND EVALUATION?

The "Plan of Action" is the feedback and recommendations set forth by an approved third-party drug counselor who is the expert in this field.

An evaluation is conducted by an outside drug and alcohol licensed counselor. The counselor will meet with the student individually to assess and make a professional recommendation as to the scope of the problem and the assistance the student needs. For example, if a student has been determined to be a first-time/one time-user they could be recommended a low-level program of support. If someone is determined a chronic user then they will be most likely recommended to a more intensive program of support.

## ABOUT OUR PARTNER, PSYCHEMEDICS:



After looking into various options, Psychemedics was selected as the provider for Central Catholic. Psychemedics' hair testing has undergone many scientific reviews, has numerous patents, and has never lost a court challenge. For example, comparison studies have shown that Psychmedics' testing is up to 5-10 times more effective in identifying drug usage than urinalysis.

Visit [www.psychemedics.com](http://www.psychemedics.com) for more information.

## I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS. WHO CAN I TALK TO?

**MR. JAMES DONAHUE, '03**  
Director of Family and Support Services

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Principal

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## OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR SON:

Central Catholic High School will always look for ways to keep our students safe and help them develop into the young men that God intends them to be. Our Catholic and Lasallian mission of education was always first and foremost in our mind as we developed this initiative.

We believe that this initiative is an important step in helping our students better understand the sacredness of their own bodies and assist them in making choices that keeps them on the path to a successful future.

*Saint John Baptist De La Salle ... Pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts ... Forever!*