

Frequently Asked Questions: The School District of Manatee County's Random Drug-Testing Program

The following are frequently asked questions about the mandatory, random student drug-testing program to be conducted in Manatee's high schools. For further information, please visit the Safe and Drug-Free School's website at: www.manatee.k12.fl.us/safe.

Q: Why test for recreational drugs?

A: According to the 2006 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey, abuse of certain substances among Manatee County secondary students exceeds the state average. Not only will random drug testing identify students with serious substance use issues, but it will also arm our students with a legitimate and effective tool for resisting peer or other pressures to use.

Q: Why test only student athletes and cheerleaders?

A: The Supreme Court of the United States has upheld that only those students participating in extracurricular activities may be subjected to mandatory, random drug-testing, because participating in such activities is voluntary.

Q: How long will the testing program be in place?

A: The program will begin on November 1st 2008. The federal grant is guaranteed for the 2008-09 school year with an additional two years of funding available based on first year results.

Q: Is compliance with the testing program necessary for eligibility in athletics and cheerleading?

A: Yes. Any student wishing to participate in any interscholastic athletic competition, to include cheerleading, must return the signed consent form in order to be eligible.

Q: How will the testing program work?

A: Once the student-athletes submit the signed consent form, they will be entered into a pool of other eligible athletes from their school and assigned a confidential number. Traveling to each school once a week, a testing technician will utilize a computer software program for random selection of students' assigned numbers. Students who are randomly selected will report to the school clinic to provide a urine sample. Specific protocols are designed to insure test validity and student privacy.

Q: What if a student does test positive?

A: Student athletes who do test positive must attend the six-week Substance Abuse Family Education program (SAFE) offered by the district *or* a comparable treatment/counseling program (as approved by the SAFE Coordinator and at the cost of the family). Failure to attend any of the classes or failure to test clean by the end of the program will result in a 30 day suspension from athletic participation. Subsequent positive tests may result in 30 day or one year suspensions from athletic competition. (Please see attached flow chart for more information.)

Q: What drugs are screened through the testing?

A: Amphetamines, Benzodiazepines, THC, Cocaine, Opiates, and Alcohol (by use of breathalyzer). Methamphetamines may also be additionally tested for based on laboratory agreement.

Q: How confidential are the results?

A: All results will be held in the highest confidentiality possible and will be limited to the technician, student-athlete, principal, athletic director, coach, parent or guardian, and laboratory.

Q: Can initial results be challenged?

A: All initial results are sent to a lab for verification. When families are notified, they may request contact information from the lab so that they may discuss any medication, food, or other possible reasons for a possible false positive.

Q: Are there any costs involved for the student-athlete or family?

A: Fees for all initial testing and lab verification are covered through a grant. There is no charge for the six-week SAFE program.

The School District of Manatee County

Mandatory Random Drug-Testing Procedures and Consequences

Student-Athlete submits consent form and is entered into the testing pool for random selection.

Positive

Student is selected by a random number-generating software program and reports to the school clinic for testing.

Negative

Initial in-cup testing results positive:

- Student, parents, principal, and athletic director immediately notified
- Specimen sent to nationally certified lab for verification and to determine whether there are any mitigating factors that may have registered a false positive

Initial in-cup testing results negative:

- The student will return to class.
- The student's number will be re-entered into the pool for possible future selection throughout the year.

FIRST OFFENSE

- A first offense is when a student-athlete has tested positive (lab verified) for the first time and has not previously violated the district's substance abuse policy.
- The student is required to attend Manatee County's Substance Abuse Family Education (SAFE) program with a parent or guardian.
- Failure to attend any SAFE class (not excused by Principal) or failure to test clean by the end of the SAFE program results in suspension from athletic competition for 30 calendar days; however, the student will be allowed to remain on the team and practice. (If 30 days is not remaining in the season, the term will continue into the next season in which the athlete participates.)
- The student will be placed on probation and subject to monthly testing for the remainder of the academic year.

SECOND OFFENSE

- A second offense is when a student tests positive a second time or when the initial positive result is coupled with any prior violation of the district's substance abuse policy.
- A second offender will be ineligible to participate in any sport for 30 calendar days from the date of the latest test. (If 30 days is not remaining in the season, the term will continue into the next season in which the athlete participates.)
- In order to return following the 30-day suspension, the student must meet with the District SAFE Coordinator as deemed necessary and test clean.

THIRD OFFENSE

- A third offense is when a student tests positive a third time or has a second positive result coupled with a prior violation of the district's substance abuse policy.
- The student will be ineligible to participate in any sport for one calendar year from the date of the latest test and will not be able to remain on a team or practice.
- In order to return following the year-long suspension, the student must meet regularly with the District SAFE Coordinator for that duration and agree to counseling or other treatment by a licensed provider as deemed appropriate.

Note: If results of the alcohol breathalyzer or in-cup testing device, combined with behavioral/ other physical cues, indicate intoxication, the student will be subject to disciplinary action under the student code of conduct.

Consent Form

Participation in the Mandatory Random Drug-Testing Program

This form must be completed and signed by each high school student-athlete and his/ her parent or legal guardian. This form is required for all students who participate in any FHSAA-sanctioned athletic competition, to include cheerleading. Eligibility for participation will not be granted until this form has been signed and returned to the student's school.

Student-Athlete Name _____ **Sex** _____

School _____ **Grade Level** _____

Statement of Mandatory Random Drug-Testing Consent

By signing this form, I affirm that I am aware of the School Board of Manatee County's Mandatory Random Drug-Testing Program, which requires the following for any student-athlete who is found to have used any tested drug or substance:

- A first positive test will require the student-athlete to enroll in the District's Substance Abuse Family Education (SAFE) program or a comparable private treatment/counseling program (as approved by the SAFE Coordinator at the family's expense).
- Failure to attend any SAFE class (not excused by Principal) or failure to test clean by the end of the SAFE program results in suspension from athletic competition for 30 calendar days; however, the student will be allowed to remain on the team and practice.
- Students who test positive will be entered into a probationary period for the remainder of that academic year and will be subject to regular monthly testing.
- Any further positive test results either through monthly probationary guidelines or future random testing will result in the sanctions identified in the penalties section of the policy governing this program.

I affirm that I was provided an opportunity to review the procedures for the testing program that accompanied this form and understand the test procedures, penalties for a positive finding and my child's (student-athlete's) rights to challenge a positive finding or appeal the penalties imposed as a result of a positive finding.

I agree to allow the certified testing technician provided through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program to test my child if his/her corresponding number is randomly chosen in order to remain eligible for participation in any FHSAA-sanctioned sport.

I agree that my child will provide a urine sample to the testing technician upon request. I understand that if my child fails to do so, he/she will be immediately suspended from interscholastic competition for a period of 30 calendar days. However, there will be a 24-hour window in which my child may request to be tested after speaking with his/her parents and/ or coaches, with no penalty.

I understand that this consent form and the results of any drug tests are completely confidential and will be shared only with the testing technician, testing lab, athletic director, coach, principal, the student-athlete and their parents. No records will leave this school district; the records will be destroyed upon graduation.

I understand that test results will not be made a part of my child's permanent school record and cannot be used as evidence in any criminal proceeding.

Name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____ Date: _____

Name of parent(s): _____

Signature of parent (1) _____ Date: _____

Signature of parent (2) _____ Date: _____

Home address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code _____

The completed and signed consent form must be submitted prior to participation in any competitive FHSAA event.