

February 26, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians,

St. Xavier High School offers many advantages to your son. One of those advantages is our commitment to Jesuit education. The legacy of this education includes striving for the magis or “the more” as we practice *cura personalis*, or “care for the whole person,” in our mission to form men of faith, scholarship, leadership, and service.

Over the past decade, we have offered our students new opportunities in the classroom and out. We have developed a health and wellness program that includes increased professional development for faculty and staff, educational opportunities for parents and students, and new support programming through our school counseling department. At the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year we will add mandatory and random drug testing to our wellness program.

Starting in August 2019, we will collect hair samples to test for cocaine, opiates (including heroin, oxycodone, oxymorphone, hydrocodone, hydromorphone), PCP, amphetamines (including ecstasy), marijuana, and Adderall. We believe the large majority of our students will test negative, with some using the new policy to initiate or advance constructive discussions with their families, school counselors, or teachers. For those who test positive, a program of evaluation and support begins, with additional testing in 90 days. In the case of a second positive test, disciplinary action becomes part of the process. A third positive test at any time during a student’s enrollment results in dismissal from St. Xavier.

We believe now is the time to start this wellness initiative because of the growing threat of drugs and alcohol to adolescents. Like all teenagers, our students face constant pressure to experiment with illegal substances. They see a growing acceptance of drug culture in mass media, in society in general, and even in our legislatures, with recent decriminalization of marijuana in multiple states.

Since the testing will not begin until next school year, students who may currently have issues with illegal drug use have an opportunity to seek help now in order to be drug-free in the fall. If at any time during the rest of this school year you would like help supporting your son while he addresses a drug problem, you may reach out to his counselor or a school administrator, and every effort will be made to assist in helping your son overcome the problem. The student remains in good standing and the family can count on complete confidentiality. An avenue of self-reporting will continue to be part of our program going forward.

Though there is no evidence of widespread substance abuse among our student body, even one student at risk is too many. Many schools have told us, and we agree, that this program gives students who may succumb to peer pressure an easy reason to say no because they know they will be tested. Overall, our goal is to partner with our students and families to negotiate the external pressures of adolescence and help our students grow as men in the service of others, guided primarily by a strong set of internal values.

We will provide several opportunities for community conversations about our policy. Administrators will discuss the policy face to face with every freshmen, sophomore and junior in a classroom setting beginning on Wednesday, February 27, so we can explain the program to our students and answer any questions they may have. We will encourage our students to continue the discussion at home and in their classes moving forward.

In addition, parents are invited to information sessions on March 4th and 5th beginning at 7pm in the theater. The St. Xavier administration, along with representatives from Psychomedics, the company working with us on the testing, will be present to talk about the program and answer any questions you may have.

We look forward to caring for our students in this new way and to your support for an initiative already in place at a number of other Jesuit and local Catholic high schools. For additional information on the new drug testing policy, please go to our website: **Add website link**. If you have questions after attending the information session and reviewing the posted information posted, please email our Assistant Principal for Student Services, Jason Ahlers, at JAhlers@StXavier.org or our Dean of Students, Brian Schaeper at BSchaeper@StXavier.org.

Members of the St. Xavier community will receive information about this new policy today. Should you be asked by others in the community about it, feel free to let them know about our new policy and direct them to **add website** if they would like more information.

Thank you for your support of this initiative.

Terry Tyrrell