

Background and Justification

Over the last several decades SCPS has implemented several programs to help our students become aware of the dangers of alcohol and unauthorized drugs and to provide incentives to avoid alcohol and illegal drugs. The programs provide information to help our students understand the immediate and long-term impacts of alcohol and drug abuse. These programs include: Too Good For Drugs, Drug Awareness and Resistance Education (DARE), Students Against Drunk Drivers, After-Prom, Project Graduation and various other initiatives.

Despite the educational initiatives and incentives implemented in SCPS, during the past three years, 35 students were disciplined for drug or alcohol related incidents in SCPS.

Where drug and alcohol incidents persist and as a supplement to educational initiatives, many Virginia public school divisions have implemented random drug testing of students as a condition of student participation in specific privileges offered at school.

With this background, the Smyth County Schools Pledge Program is based on the following facts:

- Student participation in extra-curricular activities is voluntary. Students who choose to participate do so with the understanding their participation is a privilege contingent on their adherence to high moral, ethical, and academic standards.
- Students who drive to school are afforded the privilege of on-campus parking.
- Students who participate in extra-curricular activities and students who are able to drive to school are often viewed as role models and leaders by their peers and younger students. For their own health and safety and as role models for their peers and young students, they should pledge to avoid alcohol and illegal drugs.
- Medical studies establish that drug and alcohol use impair motor skills, learning, memory retention, reasoning ability and coordination.
- Any measurable amount of drugs or alcohol in a person's body can cause some degree of impairment. The impairments associated with illegal use of drugs and consuming alcohol exacerbate the safety risks associated with participation in sports and other extracurricular activities and operation of motor vehicles.
- Use of alcohol is illegal for anyone under the age of 21. All uses of controlled substances without, or inconsistent with, a prescription are illegal. Misuse of over-the-counter drugs (inconsistent with the label) also can impair functioning and be illegal.
- SCPS needs to supplement its educational initiatives in order to identify and prevent illegal alcohol and drug use among its students, to provide direction to students with drug and alcohol problems, and to give students additional incentives to decline illegal use of drugs and alcohol.

Definitions

The terms defined below as used in this policy shall have the meanings assigned to them in this section. All other terms used herein shall have their common or ordinary meanings