St. Mary Catholic Central to Institute Random Mandatory Drug Testing Program

St. Mary Catholic Central High School has announced that beginning with the 2012/2013 academic year the school’s Drug and Alcohol policy will include a random, mandatory drug testing program for all students, faculty, staff and coaches.

SMCC President, Sean Jorgensen stated: “We believe that including a testing program in our comprehensive approach to addressing the issue of teenage drug and alcohol use will enhance our ability to deter students from using drugs. The primary focus of our policy is prevention, not punishment. We are providing students with another excuse not to use.”

Jorgensen continued; “This policy will also enable us to partner with the families of students who do make such destructive decisions by helping them seek an effective, loving, and proactive solution to their negative actions. We seek to engage our families in a participatory effort, focused on deterrence, identification of those in need of assistance, restorative support, and recognition of the moral significance of drug and alcohol abuse.”

SMCC Principal, Jenny Biler said; “We have a vital interest in maintaining a positive learning environment, one that is safe and healthy for all of our students and staff. It is our goal to form our students spiritually, intellectually, and socially into faithful disciples of Jesus Christ and successful members of society. We recognize the challenges that adolescents face in today’s society, with regard to alcohol and drugs. As the Church observes, use of alcohol and illegal drugs, and the abuse of prescription medications by teens inflicts grave damage on mind, body,
and spirit. SMCC considers alcohol, drug, and tobacco use by teenagers as a serious social problem. The consequences of teenage drug use impact the school and can interfere with learning and the fullest possible development of each student.”

The policy will include all students, faculty, staff and coaches in the testing pool. All participants will be required to consent to participation in all the aspects of this policy and its accompanying administrative regulation as a condition of the continued enrollment/employment at the school.

The testing program has been put in place after a year of research, study, discussion and prayer by school administrators, the SMCC School Board, and Archdiocesan staff. The new policy was announced in a communication sent to parents on May 1. The school hosted a parent meeting on May 15 that included presentations and a question and answer session with representatives from the SMCC, the testing company, and the Third Party Administrator.

SMCC will partner with Psychemedics Corporation and Mercy Memorial Hospital’s Corporate Connection. Psychemedics will serve as the testing laboratory, employing their patented, state-of-the-art, FDA-approved hair analysis. The firm provides the same testing technology to 11% of Fortune 500 companies, over 300 schools nationally, and to a number of the largest law enforcement and public safety organizations across the country.

Mercy Memorial’s Corporate Connection will serve as the program’s Third Party Administrator. In this role, Corporate Connection will conduct the anonymous, random selection, provide certified technologist to collect the hair samples, handle verification and shipment of to the testing laboratory, and have the test results reviewed by a licensed Medical Review Officer. Mercy Memorial Hospital will also assist the school and its families with confidential follow up assessment, treatment, and counseling for any individual testing positive.
“We are very pleased to be able to partner with two outstanding firms such as Psychemedics and Mercy Memorial Hospital in this effort. Psychemedics testing protocol and standards, along with Corporate Connection’s service as our Third Party Administrator will ensure the integrity, confidentially, and outstanding quality of the program,” said Biler.

SMCC becomes the third Catholic high school in the state of Michigan to adopt a drug testing program following Warren De LaSalle High School and Lansing Catholic High School. Approximately 15% of high schools nationally, both public and private, have some form of drug testing involving their students.

Recent national surveys indicate that over 50% of high school students admit to having used illegal drugs at some point during their high school years with 30% indicating very recent use. Schools with established drug testing programs report that only 1% of tested subjects return a positive result for drugs.

Further information, including the policy and related materials and links can be found on the Parent Page of the school’s website at www.smccmonroe.com.

St. Mary Catholic Central High School, located in Monroe, Michigan, is a Catholic, co-educational, college preparatory high school sponsored by the Catholic Vicariate of Monroe. The school’s mission statement is: “Building on the charism of our founders, St. Mary Catholic Central is a Christ-centered learning community forming lives in a tradition of faithfulness to the Gospel, educational excellence, and service to others.”

For more information, please Theresa Theisen, Communications Coordinator at (734) 241-7622 ext. 159 or ttheisen@smccmonroe.com.

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