

Trial Scheme on School Drug Testing in Tai Po District

School Year 2009/10

Education Bureau
&
Narcotics Division, Security Bureau

Background

- In view of the seriousness of the school drug abuse problem, and its impacts on schools and society, there is a need to accelerate the development of school drug testing.
- Thanks to the school principals and teachers of Tai Po district, who volunteer full support for launching the Scheme in the school year 2009/10.

Purposes

1. For Prevention

- It will enhance the resolve of those students who have not taken any drugs to continue to stay away from drugs. They will be in a better position to say “no” to their peers when they are tempted to try drugs and this will help prevent the spread of drugs in schools.

2. For Rendering Assistance to Students

- The Scheme will trigger the motivation of those students abusing drugs to quit drugs and seek help, especially those who are trying drugs at an early stage. The Scheme will also provide appropriate support services to those students who wish to pull themselves out of the drug trap.

Four Guiding Principles

1. Helping students in their best interest
2. Voluntary participation
3. Keeping personal information strictly confidential
4. Professional testing and support services for students

Helping students in their best interest

- A participating student who has been tested positive or who admits drug abuse pursuant to the Scheme will –
 - not be prosecuted for drug consumption (as has been confirmed with the prosecution authorities);
and
 - not be expelled from school.

Consent to Participation

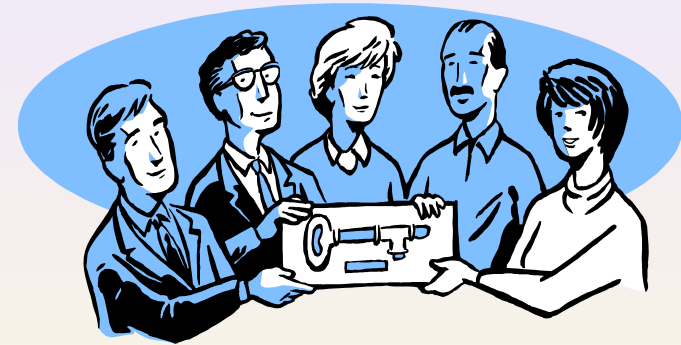
- The Protocol and the consent form will be distributed in November 2009. It should be read, signed, and dated by the student and his/her parent/guardian.
- Consent and undertaking –
 - Drug testing: provide urine specimen to be tested for illicit drugs; and
 - Support programme: join the support programme if the drug test returns a positive result, or if the student refers himself/herself to the support programme.
- The consent form is valid for the duration of the Scheme.

Consent to Participation

- Collection, Use and Release of Personal data to the following concerned parties on a confidential basis and only for the purposes of the Scheme –
 - relevant staff of Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service Cheer Lutheran Centre, that is, the student drug testing (SDT) team and the case manager assigned to the student upon any positive test result or upon self-referral;
 - school social worker of the participating school;
 - relevant staff of the participating school, that is, the school principal, the class teacher of the student and any other teacher if so suggested by the student; and
 - project officer.

SDT Team

- Composition
 - Two nurses (1 male, 1 female)
 - Two social workers
 - Information administrator
- They are responsible for –
 - performing the drug tests and carrying out ancillary arrangement;
 - receiving testing results; and
 - providing on-the-spot counselling services for students tested positive.



Case Manager

- Registered social workers from the Counselling Centre for Psychotropic Substances Abuser (CCPSA)
- They are responsible for –
 - assessing the identified students' needs; and
 - providing or coordinating of suitable counselling, treatment and rehabilitation services, including the conduct of a multi-disciplinary case conference to formulate an effective support programme for the identified students.



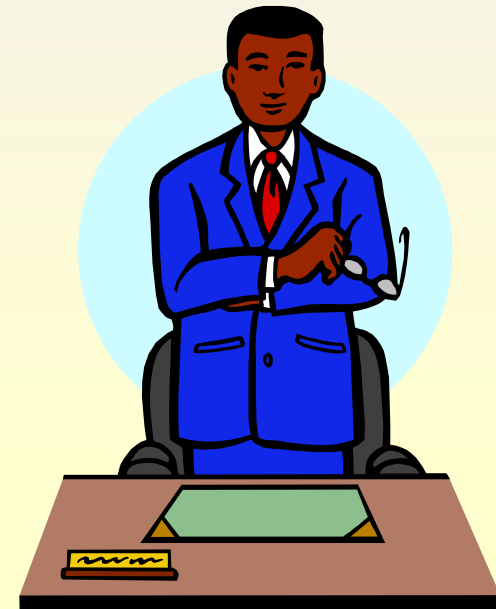
School Social Worker

- He/she is responsible for –
 - providing timely counselling to participating students, identified students and their parents/guardians before the cases of identified students are more specifically handled by the case manager assigned.



School Principal

- He/she is responsible for –
 - supervising the running of the Scheme at school;
and
 - providing the school's support for the participating and identified students.



Class Teacher / Teacher Suggested by the Student

- He/she is responsible for –
 - providing assistance to the running of the Scheme at school; and
 - supporting the participating and identified students.



Project Officer

- He/she is responsible for –
 - observing the SDT team on school visits and offering comments on whether the SDT team has adhered to the drug testing procedures set out in the Protocol;
 - advising participating schools on the data privacy requirements relating to drug testing as set out in the Protocol, and relaying concerns identified to relevant authorities;
 - handling complaints relating to drug testing from participating students, their parents/guardians, or other relevant parties; and
 - compiling the following reports –
 - school visit reports to school principals; and
 - monthly compliance reports and a final one to school principals and the Government.

Confidentiality and Personal Data Privacy

- Personal data obtained under the Scheme are protected under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.
- Records of confidential information kept by reporting agencies is also protected by Part VIIA (sections 49A-49I) of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (DDO).
- Confidential information –
 - the use, or alleged use, by that person of a dangerous drug;
 - the conviction of that person for an offence under the DDO; and
 - the care, treatment or rehabilitation of that person by reason of his use of dangerous drug

Data Protection Principles

1. All concerned parties should restrict themselves to obtaining and disclosing personal data which are strictly necessary for the purposes of the Scheme.
2. All personal data will be erased as soon as they are no longer required for the purposes of the Scheme.
3. Personal data collected shall not be used for any purpose other than the purposes of the Scheme without prescribed consent of the data subject.
4. All data users must establish and maintain appropriate security measures to protect personal data.
5. All data users must put in place and make available their personal data policies and practices.
6. All data subjects have rights to access to and correction of their personal data.

Drug Testing

- Approximately 5% of participating students from a school will be randomly selected and tested by the SDT team.
- Generally speaking –
 - each school will be visited twice per month;
 - some 32 to 40 students (out of 800 participating students) may be selected and tested.
- Student selected for a screening test will remain in the total population subject to future random selection (except for those enrolled in support programmes under the Scheme).

Drug Testing Day

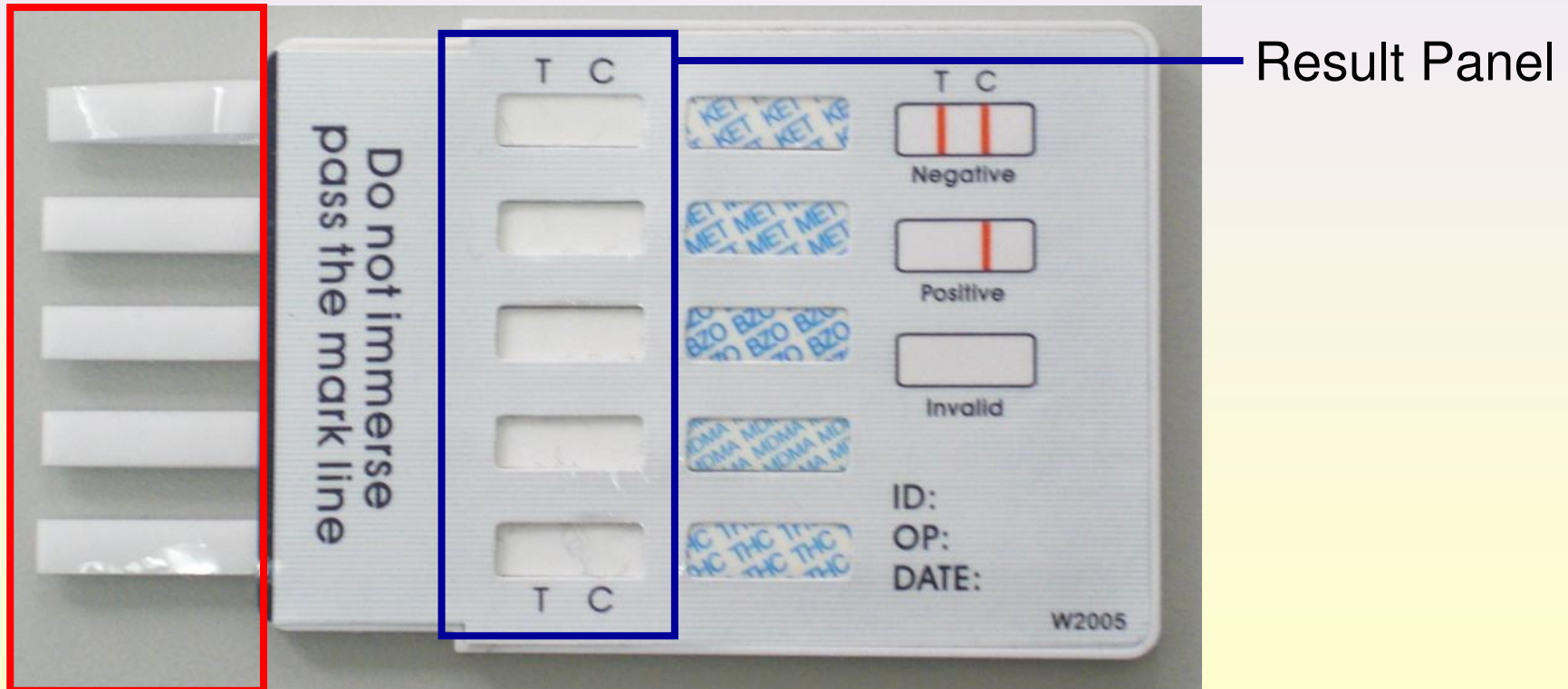
- SDT team will conduct the drug test, which last for about 15 minutes –
 - Briefing interview
 - Collection of urine specimen
 - Screening test
 - Debriefing after the drug test
- The project officer will be present to observe the screening drug tests conducted by the SDT team are in accordance with the Protocol.
- Specimens with positive results will be sent to the Government Laboratory for confirmatory tests.

Urine Specimen Collection

- The SDT team will make their best endeavours to put the selected students at ease and to dispel undue concerns or misunderstandings about drug tests and the Scheme.
- Student is allowed to provide his specimen in a rest room that allows for individual privacy.
- The process of collecting urine specimens will not be observed by the SDT team or the project officer.

Urine Test Kit

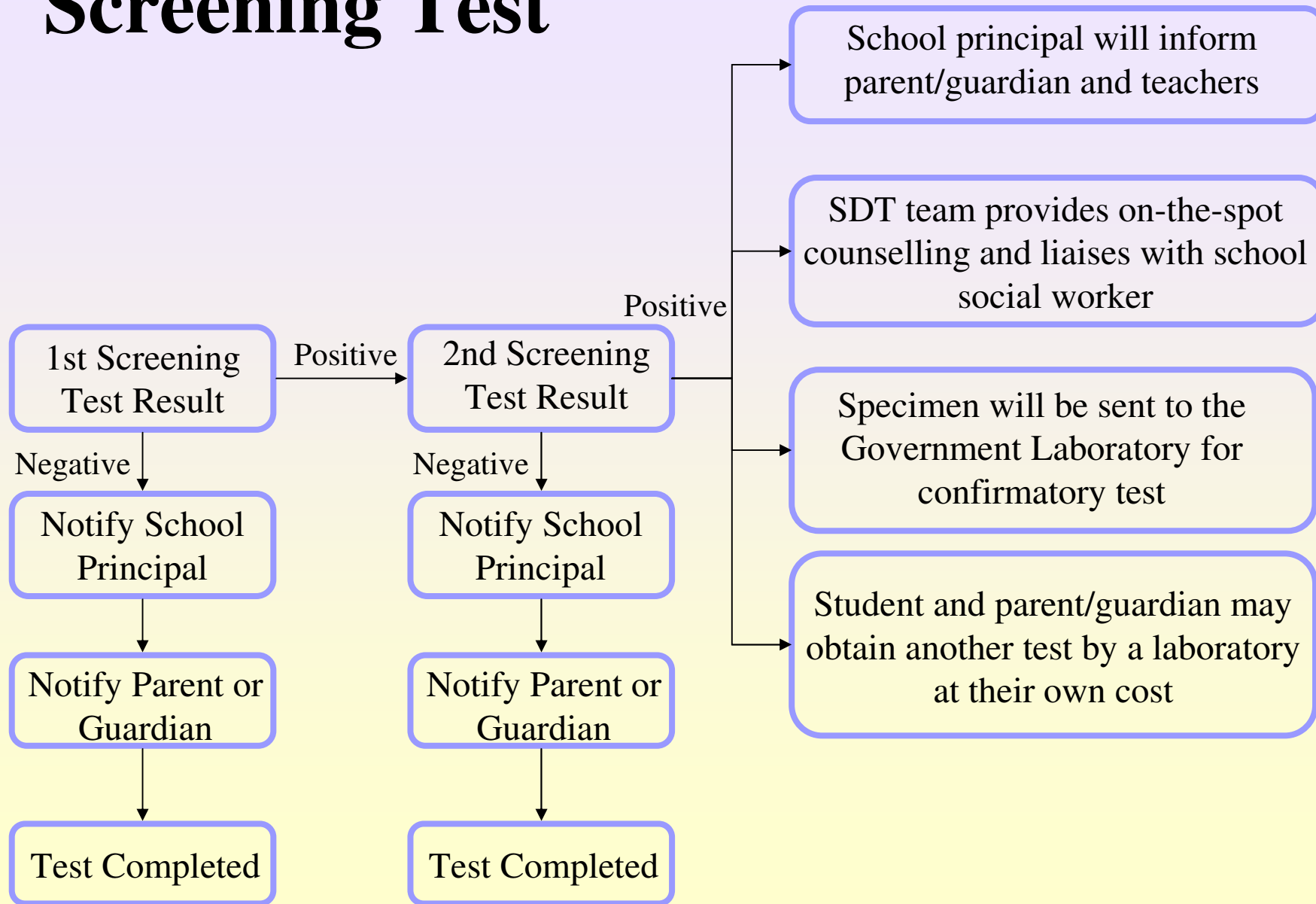
Specimen Cells



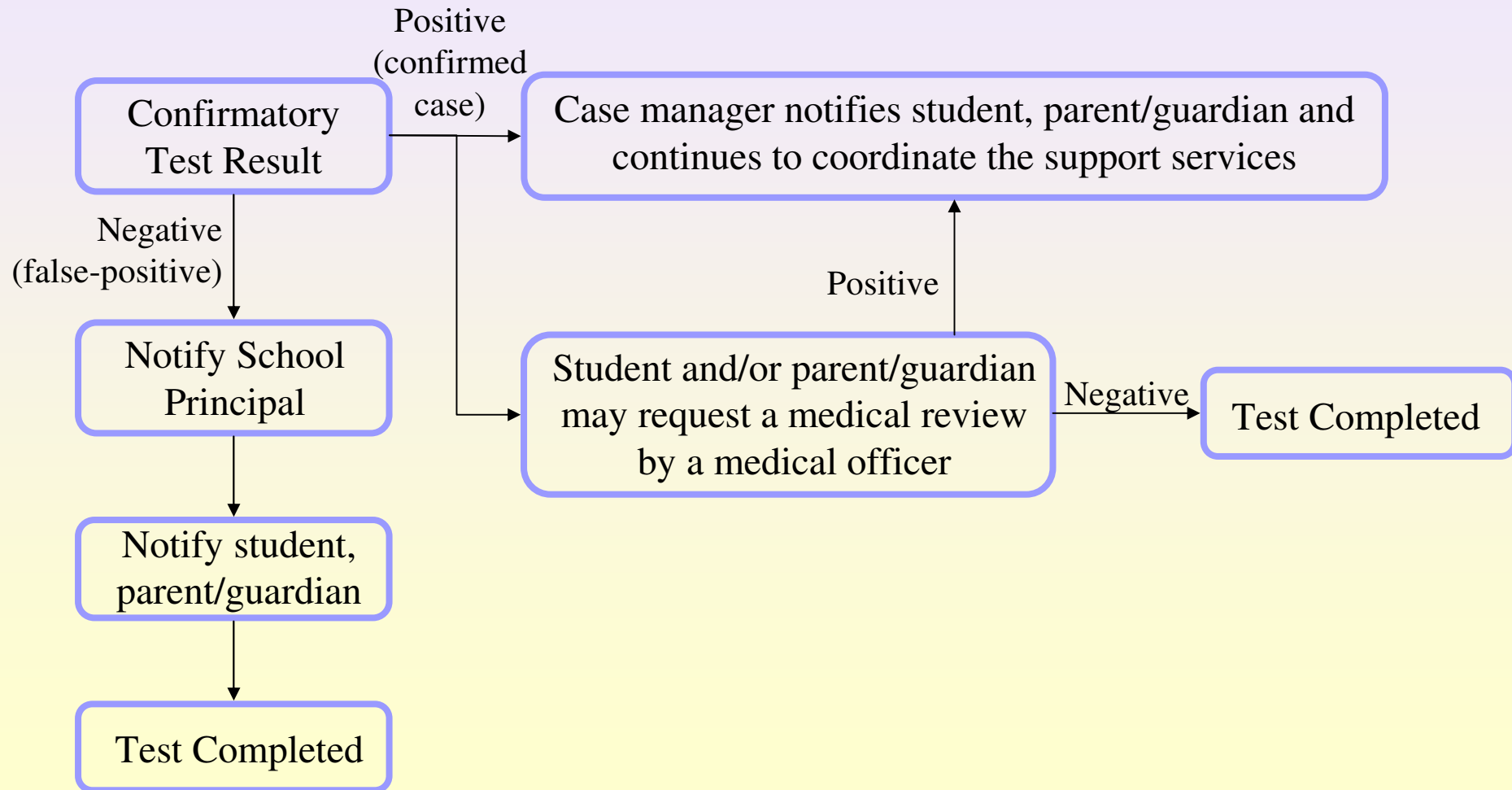
Reliability of Screening Tests

- The screening test device is sensitive to the consumption of drugs in the past few days.
- If the screening test returns a positive result –
 - conduct a second screening test;
 - using same urine specimen; and
 - using a test kit of a different brand.
- Confirmatory test will be arranged should the two screening tests return positive result.
- SDT team will provide immediate counselling to those tested positive.

Screening Test



Confirmatory Test



Support Programme

Case Conference

- To be held within 10 working days after notification of a confirmed case.
- Formulate support programme to continue with assistance to the identified student.
- The case manager will discuss with the student and his parent/guardian on details of the support programme for agreement before implementation.

Support Programme

Experimental abuser / Non-dependent regular abuser

- Parents/guardians should pay more attention to the student, and may also arrange medical and counselling services through their own means
- Continue normal schooling, and receive counselling and assistance from school social workers and teachers
- Community-based support services outside campus (e.g. CCPSA)
- Basic medical support
- Special medical treatment (e.g. Substance Abuse Clinic, psychological medicine clinic)
- “Your Health, Our Concern” community network
- Mentoring scheme

Support Programme

Addicted (dependent) abuser

- Voluntary residential drug treatment and rehabilitation centres
- Post-rehabilitation
 - Return to school
 - Reintegrate into community

Support Programme

Non-drug users and other students

- In light of the general drug situation as revealed by the Scheme, promotion, education and prevention programmes may be arranged by the school, CCPSA and other parties.

Self-referral

- Selected students can admit abuse of drugs at anytime during the drug testing process.
- Participating students who are not selected for the drug tests can admit abuse of drugs at anytime to any school personnel.
- Students having made admission of drug abuse will be treated as confirmed cases and will be followed up as such.

Refusal

- If a student refuses to take the drug test, the class teacher / teacher suggested by the student will address any concern the student may have but always be borne in mind that participation is entirely voluntary.
- If a student tampers with the testing process, he/she will be followed-up by the class teacher / teacher suggested by the student.
- Students will be referred to the school social worker if in emotional distress.
- Parent/guardian who has given Consent to Participation will be notified if student refuses to take the screening test.

Withdrawal of Consent

- Participating students and parents/guardians may jointly withdraw Consent to Participation at any time during the duration of the Scheme by written notice given to the school principal.
- Participation in the Scheme is entirely voluntary; no adverse consequence will follow from any withdrawal.
- Parents may bring their child to CCPSA for voluntary drug testing if they are not participating in the Scheme. The process is strictly confidential.

Law Enforcement

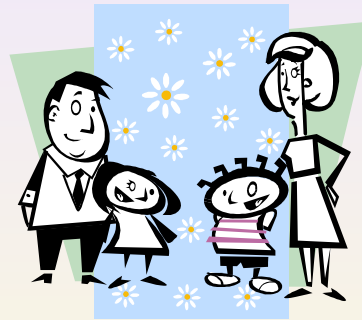
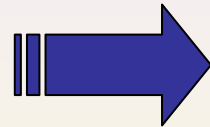
- Police and other law enforcement agencies will not be informed of the personal data of any student.
- For better focusing efforts to combat the drug problem, Police may be provided with the aggregated, non-identifying statistics to understand the drug situation of a school.
- For the purposes of the Scheme, a participating student who has been tested positive or who admits drug abuse pursuant to the Scheme will not be prosecuted for consumption of drugs.
- Any other situation outside the Scheme, that is, other than where a participating student has tested positive or admits drug abuse pursuant to the Scheme, will be governed by existing practice and laws of Hong Kong.

Timeline

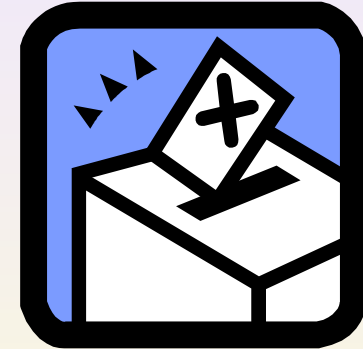
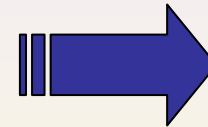


Briefing sessions for teachers, parents, and students, and explain the details of the Scheme

(October and November 2009)



Distribute Protocol and consent forms
(November 2009)



Drug tests to commence
(December 2009 to June 2010)

Evaluation of the Scheme

- In parallel with the implementation of the Scheme, a Research Team will be appointed to –
 - conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Scheme which will be implemented in December of the school year 2009/10, focusing on both the process and outcome;
 - review other local and overseas experience of drug testing in schools; and
 - suggest refinements and revisions of the Scheme and map out a practicable course of action for gradually rolling out drug testing to public sector schools in the territory.

Future Anti-Drug Work

- The Scheme will shed light on the effective model of cross-sector and multi-disciplinary downstream support service for student drug abusers.
- It helps strategic planning of anti-drug activities, including further rolling out of drug testing to public sector schools in the territory.

Anti-Drug Policy

- School drug testing is not the only means
- We are proactively pursuing a five-pronged anti-drug policy -
 1. Preventive education and publicity;
 2. Treatment and rehabilitation;
 3. Law enforcement and legislation;
 4. External cooperation; and
 5. Research.
- Care for the youth –Path Builders initiative

Thank You