



From the Office of the Headmaster

**Tuscaloosa Academy**

*Think. Play. Belong.*

Monday, August 02, 2010

Dear TA Parents:

After three successful years, Tuscaloosa Academy will continue its Substance Abuse Education Program as the best way to help educate and protect our students from the serious consequences of illegal drugs. Tuscaloosa Academy's Board is committed to the school mission statement, "to maximize each student's potential for academic achievement, character development, and readiness for life".

**A key component of this initiative is mandatory drug testing of all students in grades seven through twelve. All TA employees are also tested.** For further information on our Universal Mandatory Drug Testing Program, please see the section under "Students" on our website. Hair analysis performed by a licensed clinical laboratory was the selected method of testing due to the ease of handling. This method is minimally intrusive, not embarrassing, and provides a longer window of detection (90 days). It is the most widely used system of analysis by other schools. The testing begins in September and the results will reflect any drug use during the previous 90 days. **Parents of students in grades 7-12 should discuss this letter and our Substance Abuse Policy with their children immediately.** Another aspect of this initiative is the use of breathalyzers at the school prom and other school occasions. The primary focus of this program is prevention, not punishment.

All test results remain strictly confidential between the student, administrator, and parents. The initiation and continuing implementation of this program was not in reaction to a particular incident or a concern regarding widespread use of addictive drugs by our students. However, we do realize that our students, like all other students, are exposed to addictive drugs including alcohol, and we must do all in our power to help them "maximize their potential" and resist peer and societal pressures. We want our students to make the right decisions for their lives. Tuscaloosa Academy will not tolerate the possession or use of illegal drugs; we are committed to offering a superior college preparatory educational experience on a safe and secure campus, free from the destructive use of illegal and addictive drugs, and those who choose to use them.

We are convinced that we must arm our young people with the sufficient knowledge and a strong reason to say "NO" when confronted with the opportunity and the pressure to participate in self-destructive and illegal drug use. Your cooperation and enthusiastic support is important and greatly appreciated.

Should you have immediate questions, please direct them to Dr. Barry Peterson, Associate Headmaster at ext. 201.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell  
Headmaster

Dr. Barry Peterson  
Associate Headmaster