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Beginning August 1, 2017, certain students in Grades 7 through 12 at East Washington will be subjected to random drug tests.

Only students who drive to school or who are involved in athletics or extra-curricular activities will be tested.

Each month, an outside organization will randomly select 15 students for testing, and the organization will perform a urinalysis on the selected students.

It has not yet been determined which drugs will be tested for, but the school will work with the organization, administrators, and local law enforcement to identify trends in substance abuse in the area.

The policy targets not only student athletes, but also those involved in extra-curricular activities and those who drive, so as to encourage students who are most involved at school to stay away from drugs.

Decisions about the policy were made by a committee of teachers, administrators, and parents.

East Washington has been considering implementing a drug testing policy for a number of years.

They are one of the only two schools in the Mid Southern Conference that does not currently

have one, and many of the schools that have drug testing policies have confirmed their positive influence.

Scott Newcomb, Athletic Director at Eastern High School, had a hand in finally getting a policy into place.

“With the issues with drugs in our county, we just felt like something needed to be done,” said Newcomb of the policy. “We wouldn’t be doing our job if we didn’t try to figure out ways to help kids and try to keep kids off of doing those things.”

For a student whose urinalysis comes back positive, the consequences are still being determined.

Student athletes will be punished according to the already-established drug use policy, and depending on the severity of the offense, there could be legal consequences as well.

Under the new policy, students will have the option of participating in an education and rehabilitation program in order to reduce their punishment.

Identifying and punishing students who are already using drugs is not the only goal of the policy. The policy should also work to deter students from using drugs in the first place.

The school hopes that it will reduce the effects of peer pressure, and that it will give students who might feel pressured into using drugs another way to say no.

Newcomb hopes the policy will have a positive impact on the students.

He said of the changes he hopes to see, “I think we’ll be able to see our culture change, with

the way kids handle themselves and how they're doing with athletic performance or performance in the classroom."