



**VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Department of Student Support Services**  
1234 Arcadia Avenue, Vista, CA 92084-3404  
Ph: (760) 726-2170 Fax: (760) 724-3295  
[www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)  
*Serving the communities of Vista, Oceanside, San Marcos,  
Carlsbad and San Diego County*

Board Members  
Rich Alderson  
Jim Gibson  
Carol Weise Herrera  
Rosemary Smithfield  
Cipriano Vargas

Superintendent  
Linda Kimble, Ed.D.

04/20/18

RE: Interquest Drug Detection Dogs

Dear Parents of VUSD High School Students,

In our continuing effort to provide a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff, Vista Unified School District (VUSD) has retained the services of Interquest, a company that provides scent trained detection canines to minimize the presence of unwanted contraband on campus.

More specifically, the canines will make periodic visits to each high school campus in the district on an unannounced basis throughout the remainder of the 2017-18 school year. The canines are trained to detect illicit drugs, alcoholic beverages, gunpowder based items including guns, and commonly abused medications. Items found will be processed in accordance with school policy.

I encourage you to have a discussion with your student concerning prohibited items in accordance with the student handbook. In an effort to describe and notify students of this new service, Interquest will be conducting student assemblies and parent information sessions at each high school on the following dates (please attend parent information session of your choice):

- **Tuesday, April 24 - Mission Vista High School (1306 Melrose Drive, Oceanside, CA, 92057)**
  - Student Assemblies: 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in Gymnasium
  - Parent Information: 5:30 p.m. in Gymnasium
- **Wednesday, April 25 - Vista High School (1 Panther Way, Vista, CA, 92084)**
  - Student Assemblies: 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in Gymnasium
  - Parent Information: 6:00 p.m. in Library
- **Thursday, April 26 - Rancho Buena Vista High School (1601 Longhorn Dr, Vista, CA 92081)**
  - Student Assemblies: 9:45 - 11:00 a.m. in Gymnasium
  - Parent Information: 6:00 p.m. in Performing Arts Center (PAC)
- **Friday, April 27 – Major General Murray High School (215 N Melrose Dr, Vista, CA 92083)**
  - Student Assembly: 10:15 a.m. in Quad area
- **Friday, April 27 - Alta Vista High School (1575 Bonair Road, Vista, California 92084)**
  - Student Assembly: 12:00 p.m. in Quad area.

Unfortunately, schools remain a target for those who continue to attempt to impede the education process and we are committed to provide every reasonable measure to protect our students and staff thus providing the best learning environment possible.

I would like to assure students, parents, and the community that our high schools are taking a proactive approach to school safety by working with Interquest to search school premises using certified, reliable detection dogs that are non-aggressive, friendly, and approachable.

*The purpose of Vista Unified School District is to inspire each and every student to persevere as critical-thinking individuals who collaborate to solve real-world problems.*



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The program goals are to:

- **Deter students from bringing drugs, alcohol, guns/weapons, and explosives to school**
- **Use a positive, proactive approach**
- **Give students an excuse to “SAY NO” to drugs, alcohol, and guns/weapons**
- **Be non-intrusive and effective**
- **Create a safe environment for students to learn**

The VUSD high schools, in cooperation with the district office and Interquest, are taking the following steps to introduce a successful program: **Educate, Implement, and Deter**

**Educate:** This purpose of this letter is to first explain program goals, program effectiveness, and search procedures to students, staff, and parents. Educating these groups provides the school communities with a clear understanding of the process so that they know what to expect when an Interquest dog is on school property. Education provides the deterrence factor for the program. Each site will also run a student assembly in order to help educate the students at the sites. Each site will also hold a parent education night to help educate parents and answer questions parents may have about the program.

**Implement:** Interquest canines will visit each high school site in order to conduct unannounced, random searches. It is vital to the program that the inspections are performed unannounced to protect the program’s deterrence factor and effectiveness. When Interquest canines arrive on site they will report to a designated office and will inspect the school premises under the direction of a school administrator. Random inspections will include classrooms, lockers, commons areas, and other locations. With regard to classroom searches, students will be asked stand outside classroom and leave their backpacks, purses, and other belongings inside the classroom during the search. In the event the canine shows interest in an individual’s belongings, locker, or other possessions, the individual will be brought to the area of interest. At that time the handler will explain that the canine has shown an interest in their belongings and will remind the individual of the odors the canine is trained to detect. The individual will be asked if they can think of any reason for the canine’s interest. The handler will ask student permission to inspect their items to ensure school safety. In the event contraband is found it will be sealed in an evidence bag and the information shared with the school administration.

**Deter:** This joint program provides a consistent deterrent to the presence of drugs, alcohol, or firearms/weapons on campus. Interquest unannounced random visits have been shown to have a profound effect on a student’s decision to bring contraband on school property. Interquest dogs are visible and will become a recognized presence at our schools.

I hope that you will be able to attend any of the parent information sessions. Should you have any questions, please contact me or your high school principal.

Sincerely,

Kyle C. Ruggles, Ed.D.  
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