



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
101 BUCHANAN ROAD
ANNAPOLIS MARYLAND 21402-5100

Dear Midshipman Candidates of the Class of 2027 and Parents,

I am writing this letter to provide information regarding the Navy and the U.S. Naval Academy's policies regarding alcohol and drug abuse. For most, this information merely reinforces standards that have already been taught in the home. However, I also recognize that our midshipmen and soon to-be inducted midshipmen are not immune from societal influences.

The Navy's policy regarding drug abuse is one of "zero tolerance." Drug abuse is defined as the "wrongful use or possession of a controlled substance and includes but is not limited to the use or possession of substances such as marijuana, opioids, LSD, cocaine, amphetamines, and ecstasy." The Navy's policy also prohibits unauthorized use of prescription medication, controlled substance analogues (e.g., spice, mephedrone), natural substances (e.g., fungi, excretions), chemicals (inhalants), hemp and CBD products, and steroids with the intent to induce intoxication, excitement, or stupefaction of the central nervous system. While some states have legalized the recreational use of marijuana, Naval Academy midshipmen fall under federal law and remain subject to criminal prosecution under Article 112a of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) for marijuana use, possession, or distribution, and they are subject to separation from the Naval Academy even if such activities occur in states where they would otherwise be legal. Midshipmen who abuse drugs will be processed for discharge from the Naval Academy. Per Navy requirements, the Naval Academy routinely conducts random urinalysis testing to detect illegal drug use. Each member of the Class of 2027 will be tested upon reporting to the Naval Academy.

The Navy's policy regarding alcohol is one of "responsible use." At the Naval Academy, we promote responsible use through various methods including formal training, peer education, and special events. However, the responsible use of alcohol is permitted within the bounds of applicable law and Naval Academy policy. The legal drinking age at the Naval Academy and in the surrounding area is 21. However, per Naval Academy policy, midshipmen are not permitted to consume alcohol within Bancroft Hall or during their first year of training at the Naval Academy regardless of their age. Alcohol abuse, including underage drinking, may lead to discharge from the Naval Academy.

I encourage parents and relatives to continue to take an active role in the lives of our young people who are appointed as midshipmen. The Naval Academy has very high personal conduct standards and we dedicate significant resources to discourage alcohol and drug abuse by reinforcing a culture of education, responsibility, and accountability. As part of our Naval Academy family, we all share a common goal of developing these fine young men and women into our nation's future leaders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. P. McDonough III", is positioned above the printed name.

J. P. MCDONOUGH III
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of Midshipmen