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Moscow Launches Drug Testing Program for 8th Graders

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Anton Kardashov / TASS

Schools in Moscow are set to introduce drug tests among eighth graders to battle addiction among young people, Moscow authorities announced on Thursday.

The Moscow City Hall's department of regional security said that it had identified 29 young drug users as part of a pilot program last year administering drug tests to 10th graders and first-year vocational school students at 600 schools. Last year, the Russian Interior Ministry estimated that over 2 million Russians regularly used recreational drugs.

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Eighth-graders will now join their seniors for drug tests after "the positive results obtained in the implementation of the pilot project," the department said in a press release Thursday.

It noted that the number of students who declined to undergo medical check-ups "due to outreach efforts" was halved, from 32 percent in 2014-2015 to 15.7 percent in 2016-2017.

"Specialists also noted the possibility of identifying 'risk groups' among students who refused to undergo testing" as a success of the program, City Hall said.

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