

Burlington School System, which ranks the district as the 15th largest school district out of 115 school districts throughout the state. It is the second largest employer in the county, with more than 2,700 faculty and staff employed.

Updated April 6, 2010

The federal agency that regulates drugs has said the use of a synthetic cannabinoid is against Elon University's drug policy.

With similar effects to those of marijuana, K2 is a synthetic manufactured drug that has spread across Europe and the United States since the mid-1990s. Chemicals like JWH-018 and JWH-073, not Tetrahydrocannabinol, the active ingredient in marijuana, cause the high-related effects.

In the past year, K2 has gained popularity across college campuses. The substance has a high similar to marijuana but can also produce hallucinations, vomiting and aggression.

Vivian Gregory, coordinator of health affairs, said she doesn't comment on individual cases involving the substance but she does say that K2 has been brought to her attention.

"The way our handbook is written, despite the availability of legal drugs, is violation," Gregory said. "But that also includes using drugs not as directed."

She said K2 was not meant for human consumption. If a student caught ingesting K2 would face a possible drug violation.

"It's just like spray paint," she said. "You can breathe spray paint but if you were to hold the can of spray paint, that would be using it not as directed."

John Halfman, the creator of JWH-018, said in a syndicated article the chemicals found in K2 have never been tested on humans. He also said there was no current research on what other effects could be caused by the drug.

Chuck Galloway, director of Campus Safety and Police, said the drug is not a major problem at Elon but "once something gets out and someone makes money from it, it spreads faster."

K2 does not show up on most drug tests. Galloway said since the drug is legal and the department is not searching for the drug.

"I do understand in some states they are making K2 legal," Galloway said. "It took me a couple of months for this to become an item of interest in the part of the country."

Brian Collins, associate director of residence life, said if a student were caught smoking K2 in the dorms it would be a violation just for smoking in an academic building.

"K2 is not something we've been seeing around," Collins said. "It comes in a package that looks like incense and it is a white powder. It is possible we've come across the chemical and not known what it is. But we are not seeing packages of K2 in the halls."

The federal Drug Enforcement Administration has classified K2 as "a drug or chemical of concern." Kansas banned the substance under the name JWH-018. Missouri, Ohio, Utah, Kentucky, Georgia, North Dakota and Tennessee have all expressed interest in banning the substance.