



13th February 2024

Dear Parents / Carers

You will undoubtedly have seen reports in the news recently about the impact of vaping on young people, both in the community and in schools, all across the country. The data from ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) shows that the majority of young people do not vape, 20% say they have tried it, and far fewer are regularly vaping. However, we feel it is important to take a proactive response and ensure both our students, and their parents/carers, are aware of both the dangers of vaping and the serious dangers of vapes laced with illegal substances.

Whilst the Government promotes vaping to those over 18 as a safer alternative to smoking tobacco, it is not licensed for those under 18, as it poses a risk to young people. In addition, vaping is not permitted in school and we strongly suggest all parents and carers do not buy vapes for their children.

Students have been informed that any vape with more than 2ml of liquid, approximately more than 600 puffs, is illegal and therefore unlicensed. Vapes containing over 600 puffs are often imported illegally and therefore the person buying them has no idea what they contain; studies have shown that many illegal vapes contain nickel and even lead. If your child does vape and you are aware of this, we encourage you to have an honest conversation with them to check the content of their vapes, especially if it is unlicensed and they are unsure where it originated from.

Recently, it has come to light that some young people are now adding illegal substances to their vapes, which are causing extreme reactions and making them very unwell. The safety of our students is our number one priority, which is why we are bringing this to your attention.

The two main illegal substances that young people are adding to their vapes are THC and Spice. They are sold in liquid form and can be added to any type of vape. THC is the main active ingredient in cannabis and Spice is a synthetic form of cannabis. These illegal drugs, often referred to as "juice" or "oil", can be contained in a small plastic bottle / phial. The dangers of THC and Spice are well known, and doctored vapes of this nature were responsible for 68 deaths in the USA last year. Young people are obtaining these drugs illegally by purchasing them online (including Snapchat), meeting people face to face or possibly even buying them from shops. You will understand that this poses a serious risk to our students.

As a school, we are working closely with other local schools and the Police to ensure we can keep your children safe. In addition, we are going to take the following temporary measures to clamp down on vaping.

As of Wednesday 14th February, the following measures will be put in place:

- During lessons, *only if it is an emergency*, students will be able to use toilets in the block they are situated in.
- Before school, between lessons, at break time and lunch time, the majority of toilets will be unlocked and supervised by staff. Students will not be able to access the toilets in groups.

- At social times, Year 7 will be able to access the toilets in A block, Year 8 will use the toilets in the Science block, Year 9 will use B block toilets and then Years 10 and 11 will be able to use the toilets in the main block by the Canteen.
- Students will not be able to use the toilets in groups at any time.

These measures will be temporary whilst we safeguard and educate our students. We ask for your understanding as we work with outside agencies to support our community and raise awareness of this serious new risk to our young people.

If students are displaying behaviours which are of concern to staff, this could result in staff organising for students to be searched. Please see the DfE guidance in regards Searching, Screening and Confiscation [Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Reasons for this could include: concerns around the way in which they are presenting or interacting with others, if they are attempting to access the toilets in groups, or when they should be in lessons, and/or if multiple students are found to be in a cubicle within the toilets.

We hope that after reading this you will have frank conversations with your child to help them understand the severity and dangers of vaping and laced vapes. If you would like support for your child to help with nicotine, or other substance addiction, or further guidance on approaching this topic with your child, please contact your child's Head of Year. If you become aware of local retailers selling vapes to underage students, please contact us as a school so that we can inform trading standards.

Yours faithfully



Mr M Tyler
Deputy Headteacher