

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Electronic cigarettes/vapes

We have recently been made aware about an increase in the number of incidents in our local community where children are being exposed to potentially harmful substances through the use of vapes. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the issue and provide you with some resources if you feel that your child is involved in this kind of behaviour. I also want to alert you to the potential consequences should your child be found to be in possession of vapes on the school premises.

What is vaping?

Vaping is the act of inhaling a vapour produced by an electronic vaporiser (vape). The vapour can contain nicotine and other substances which can be very concerning. It has also been reported that children are experimenting with THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) vaping. THC is a compound in cannabis and is an illegal substance in the UK.. ***There have been reports of young people becoming unwell and needing medical attention after using vapes.***

Vapes can come in a variety of different forms, shapes and sizes. Some common styles of vapes include ones which look like a thick pen or highlighter pen. These devices are usually very small and can be concealed on a person or blend in with normal school equipment, as a consequence they can be easily mistaken or missed.

Like cigarettes, **shops cannot sell vaping items to people under the age of 18**. This includes the sale of vaping equipment, including liquids and devices. It is, therefore, clear that young people under the age of 18 should not be purchasing vapes. **Whilst the sale of items as detailed above is illegal, pupils have reported to us that they are able to acquire devices online or from older siblings, friends and unfortunately in some instances even parents/carers.**

If you feel that your child is using a vape or you just want to know more about them then the following website below will provide helpful information to support you as parents/carers in raising this important issue with your child:

- ASH (Action on Smoking and Health): <https://ash.org.uk/fact-sheets/>
- Know the Risks: <https://ash.org.uk/fact-sheets/>
- Kids Health: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/e-cigarettes.html>

We will also continue our work in school to educate pupils regarding the dangers of vaping and the legality surrounding this.

I am sure that you will agree that the possession and use of vapes on the academy premises is something that we simply cannot tolerate, consequently, we will view this in the same way as incidents of smoking or possession of smoking paraphernalia. As detailed in our Behaviour policy, anyone who is found to be in the possession of paraphernalia linked to smoking or vaping will have the said items confiscated and will be placed in isolation. Incidents of pupils smoking/vaping will be addressed with a more severe sanction.

I hope that you welcome this letter in the spirit with which it is intended and that you share and understand our concerns about this potential harmful issue. We encourage you to have a conversation with your child/children about this topic. Please don't hesitate to contact your child's form tutor if you have any further queries or concerns.

Yours faithfully

Mr A Bannon
Head of School