



Dear Parents and Carers

## **Tackling Teenage Vaping & Nicotine Pouches**

Schools nationally have seen increasing numbers of incidents involving children vaping. Data suggests that the number of children using vapes has tripled in the last three years. With increasing evidence of the harms caused to young people by vaping, and many parents approaching the school for help, the purpose of this letter is to inform you of the issue and to provide you with resources if you feel your child is involved in this kind of behaviour. We also want to outline the possible repercussions, if your child engages in vaping or has vaping paraphernalia on the school site.

### **What are the risks?**

We find that parents are frequently not aware of the risks around vaping; they do not recognise the signs, or the devices themselves. You may be familiar with vapes that emit huge plumes of smoke, but this is not the case with many devices on the market now. Vaping is the act of inhaling a vapour produced by an electronic vaporizer or e-cigarette. The vapour can contain nicotine and other substances often normalising the use of illegal drugs, such as THC.

The liquids that are vaporized come in many different flavours and might even smell fruity. For example, many of the flavours of these liquid concentrates, or 'vape juices' are designed to be appealing to children and the marketing often supports this.

### **Vaping facts**

- Many vapes contain nicotine making them very addictive
- Vapes contain many toxic chemicals; they just don't put it on the pack
- Vapes can contain the same harmful chemicals found in cleaning products, nail polish remover, weed killer and bug spray
- Vapes can leave young people at increased risk of depression and anxiety
- The nicotine in 1 vape can = 50 cigarettes. Depending on the size of vape and nicotine strength, it can be much higher
- Young people who vape are 3 times as likely to take up smoking cigarettes
- Vape aerosol is not water vapour
- Vaping has been linked to serious lung disease
- Vapes cause long-lasting negative effects on brain development
- Vapes can contain marijuana concentrates and other illegal substances.

Vaporizers or e-cigarettes come in all different shapes. Some common styles we see look like a thick pen, a small flask with a round chimney coming off the top. Some are disposable whilst others require a refill. The devices are very small and can easily be hidden on a person or blend in as pencil case items. I have included a series of images of electronic cigarette or vapes to help you understand what these devices look like. We would advise you to look through your child's belongings, if you think that they have started to vape.



Like cigarettes, it is a criminal offence to sell an age-restricted product to someone who is underage. However, we are aware that there are many shops that turn a blind eye to the sale of such devices to children. Where we become aware of premises selling vaping devices to children, we will report this to Trading Standards. Devices (some of which are unregulated) can be purchased online or bought from older siblings and friends.

### **The School Behaviour Policy**

Our behaviour policy clearly states that vapes and e-cigarettes are not permitted on our school site in the same way that tobacco or any smoking paraphernalia are not permitted. We have a duty of care to ensure the safety of all our pupils and to protect them from the behaviour of a very small minority.

If any pupil is suspected of vaping or carrying a vape, students will be asked to empty their pockets, and their locker could also be searched. An authorised member of staff will search bags, jackets and blazers. If we still have a reasonable suspicion, the authorised member of staff will use a detector wand (a hand-held metal detector) to assist with the search. We always inform you if any of the above courses of action take place.

**If a student is found to have these items in their possession, they run the very strong risk of being sanctioned with a suspension for the incident. If students refuse to be searched, the school will see this as supporting our suspicions and a sanction will be put in place.**

Vaping at Waddesdon is rare, but in order to maintain high standards and to ensure that the majority are protected from anti-social behaviour, we deem this approach to be proportionate and a likely deterrent. We held a student panel to seek the views of students from Years 7 to 13 around vaping at Waddesdon and the use of the detector wand. All students were supportive and feel that this is a positive step towards challenging this behaviour. The students have also received an assembly demonstrating the dangers and education surrounding vaping.

If your son or daughter vapes, we will work with you to educate them, and always let you know if we have our suspicions, or if a search was considered necessary. This is part of our shared contract with you as parents.

## What steps can I take if my child has used electronic cigarettes/vapes?

If you are concerned that your son/daughter are vaping I would encourage you to inform the school so we can have an educational conversation as well as a talking them through the school behaviour policy. Some young people unfortunately choose to vape. We encourage you to talk to your GP or school if you are concerned about them vaping. You can also find useful information listed below:

- ASH (Action on Smoking and Health): <https://ash.org.uk/fact-sheets/>
- NHS Better Health- talking to young people about vaping <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking/#young-people>
- Talk to Frank- Vapes <https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/vapes>

The danger of vaping is supported through teaching at school, but it is in partnership with you that we can fully enable young people to make responsible and sensible decisions.

## Nicotine Pouches



Over the past few years, while schools have worked hard to address the issue of vaping among students, another addictive product is now gaining popularity: oral nicotine pouches. These smokeless products are placed discreetly inside the upper lip, making them more difficult to detect. Nicotine pouches, often marketed in enticing flavours and easily hidden, contain high levels of nicotine and pose serious health risks, especially to young people whose brains and bodies are still developing.

Using these pouches can lead to various health problems, including impaired brain development, increased risk of mood disorders, and difficulties with attention and learning.

If you have concerns about nicotine pouches or vaping, we strongly encourage you to talk to your child about the dangers of nicotine and the possible consequences of its use. Open communication can be essential in helping your child make informed choices and avoid substances that could harm their health and future.

Please also be aware that any student found in possession of nicotine pouches may face significant disciplinary actions, including suspension. Refusal to comply with a search

request will be considered as supporting our suspicions, and appropriate sanctions will be applied.

We hope you find this letter informative and understand our concerns about this potentially harmful issue that is growing amongst young people. We encourage you to have a conversation with your child about this topic. As we learn more, we will certainly share that information. The information contained in the letter will also be shared with students in school.

The website [Talk to Frank](#) provides additional information about vapes and nicotine, as well as being an excellent resource for educating yourself and young adults about drugs.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in keeping our students safe and healthy

Yours sincerely,

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Behaviour Lead

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Designated Safeguarding Lead