



May 13, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Vaping

I am writing to inform you of the School District's concern regarding the prevalence of students vaping on school property. Results from the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey show that 29% of youth within the Interior of BC have used a vapour product with nicotine in the past month. Recently, some students have had severe reactions to vapour products that required medical attention. District staff have a number of concerns and are asking for your help to stop a behavior that health officials are saying may lead to a new generation of youth addicted to nicotine.

What is Vaping?

Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling an aerosol, often called vapour, which is produced by heating a liquid with a battery-powered device known as a vape, e-cigarette or vapour product. The liquid is often referred to as e-juice, and comes in a variety of flavours. Most e-juice contains nicotine, the highly addictive chemical that is found in cigarettes. With an array of fruit and candy-like flavours, vapour products appeal to youth. Many vapour products are easily concealed to fit in the palm of your hand, and look like USB memory sticks, lipstick tubes or ballpoint pens. The latest "pod" type devices (ex. JUUL, Vype) contain as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes in one pod. Newer generations of vapour devices can be used to inhale illicit substances such as cannabis or its components (THC, hash oil).

Health Risks

Health Canada advises that youth vaping is not safe and the long term negative health effects of vaping are still unknown. According to a [Statement from the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health on the increasing rates of youth vaping in Canada:](#)

"Nicotine is highly addictive and can have harmful impacts on the brain, affecting memory and concentration in everyone and brain development in youth and young adults. It alters part of the brain that control attention, learning, mood and impulse control. Early exposure to nicotine in adolescence may increase the severity of future dependence and tobacco."

In addition, even small amounts of the "e-juice" can be poisonous to a young child if ingested and can be toxic if spilled on the skin. The vapour devices contain a heat source and these have malfunctioned causing a mini explosion or starting a fire in purses or backpacks.

Sales to Minors is illegal

In BC, the rules around sales of vapour products are the same as cigarettes. It is against the law to sell or provide any vapour products to someone under the age of 19. In addition, vaping and smoking are banned on school property, both by school policy and the Tobacco and Vapour Product Control Act. Further, it is illegal to possess cannabis on school grounds. Witnessing students' vaping puts staff in a difficult position of having to act on this illegality as persons of

responsibility, acting in "loco parentis" or as a reasonable parent. What would a reasonable parent do when they witness a student participating in an illegal activity?

What is the Board of Education Doing?

The Board of Education has updated its Regulation 455R – Discipline to include vaping and vapour products. The Board of Education also forwarded a motion to the British Columbia School Trustees Association, that was passed, which read as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED:

"That BCSTA urge the provincial and federal governments to support tougher regulations on the sale to minors of e- cigarettes and vapour products, for example as outlined in the proposed Vulnerable Adolescents Protection from E- Cigarettes (VAPE) Act 2019, including the banning of the sale of products which are marketed specifically to young people."

What is the School District Doing?

The District is providing education to youth in elementary, middle and secondary schools outlining the facts about vaping. School staff will continue to enforce a no-vaping zone on school property. School Principals have been instructed to confiscate any vapour products they see on campus. If staff see vaping products on school property, they may confiscate them and turn them over to the RCMP.

What can Parents or Guardians Do?

- Start a conversation, speak with your child about the risks of vaping and vapour products.
- Check out Health Canada's [Consider the Consequences of Vaping](#) for more information on vapour products.
- Be a positive role model. Don't smoke or vape around young children or teens.
- Do not buy or give vapour or tobacco products to minors.
- If you vape, keep vapour products, including their nicotine refills and empty cartridges, out of the reach of children and pets.

In closing, I believe that in working together we can better educate our youth on the potential harmful consequences of vaping in order to keep them safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Kevin Kaardal
Superintendent of Schools/CEO

Attachment: Health Canada – Talking With Your Teen About Vaping

TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT VAPING

A TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS



BEFORE THE TALK: GET THE FACTS

Vaping is not harmless

- > Vaping can increase your exposure to harmful chemicals.
- > Vaping can lead to nicotine addiction.
- > The long-term consequences of vaping are unknown.
- > It's rare, but defective batteries in vaping products have caused fires and explosions.

Risks of nicotine

Nicotine is a highly addictive chemical. Youth are especially susceptible to its negative effects, as it is known to alter their brain development and can affect memory and concentration. It can also lead to addiction and physical dependence. Not all vaping products contain nicotine, but for those that do, the level of nicotine can vary widely. Some mixtures have very low levels, while others can contain more nicotine than in a typical cigarette. Even if a vaping product does not contain nicotine, there is still a risk of being exposed to other harmful chemicals.

Vaping nicotine can alter teen brain development.

Vaping versus smoking

For smokers, vaping is less harmful than smoking. However, it is not safe for youth to use any nicotine products, including cigarettes and vaping products. If you suspect your child is addicted to nicotine, talk to your healthcare provider.

Vaping liquids

The ingredients typically found in vaping liquids include glycerol, flavours, propylene glycol and varying levels of nicotine. The long-term safety of inhaling these substances in vaping products is unknown and continues to be assessed.

There is no burning during vaping, instead, the liquid is heated. This process can cause reactions and create new chemicals, such as formaldehyde. Some contaminants, such as metals, might also get into the vaping products and then into the vapour.

Quick facts

- > Vaping is intended to help smokers quit tobacco. Vaping is not for youth and non-smokers.
- > Vaping is not harmless, yet Canadian teens are trying vaping products. Data from a recent Health Canada survey showed that 23% of students in grades 7–12 have tried an electronic cigarette.
- > There are characteristics that can make vaping products more difficult for you to recognize or detect: devices come in a variety of shapes and sizes, some resembling a USB flash drive; liquids can have high levels of nicotine and come in a variety of flavours; and vaping may not leave a lingering identifiable smell.
- > Vaping products have many names, such as: e-cigarettes, vape pens, vapes, mods, tanks, and e-hookahs. They may also be known by various brand names.

Set a positive example

If you use tobacco or vaping products, be honest with your child about the risks, and any regrets, difficulties and health effects resulting from your experience.

Talk to your child about when and why you started to smoke/vape and explain how you thought it would make you feel, and how it is affecting your health.

It is never too late to quit smoking. If you are vaping to help you quit smoking, talk to your teen about it. Talk to them about addiction and how hard it can be to quit smoking. And remember, quitting smoking is possible. For free help, visit gosmokefree.gc.ca/quit or call 1-866-366-3667.

Vaping is not intended for youth and non-smokers.

START THE CONVERSATION

Find the right moment

Take advantage of situations where you can talk about vaping. It doesn't have to be formal. For example, when passing a group of teenagers who are vaping, take the opportunity to have a conversation with your teen about it. Discuss the facts and correct any misconceptions.

Be patient and ready to listen

- > Avoid criticism and encourage an open dialogue.
- > Remember, your goal is to have a meaningful conversation, not to give a lecture.

Get support

- > Not sure where to begin? Ask your healthcare provider to talk to your teen about the risks of vaping.
- > You might also suggest that your teen talk with other trusted adults, such as relatives, teachers, faith leaders, coaches, or counsellors whom you know are aware of the risks of vaping. These supportive adults can help reinforce your message as a parent.

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Don't expect to have just one conversation with your child. Odds are you will probably need to talk about the subject many times and in many different places. Whenever you have some time together, you can strike up the conversation again. You will also find that as your child grows, your conversations about vaping will change and reflect their growing maturity, intellectual abilities and the pressures they face. Keep in mind that talking about it can also set the stage for important discussions about tobacco, alcohol, drugs and other risky behaviours.

WORK WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

- > Confirm that there is no tobacco or vaping product use at school events.
- > Ask the principal if the school has a program to educate students about the effects of tobacco and vaping product use.
- > Lobby for tobacco and vaping prevention and cessation training for teachers.
- > Encourage other parents to get involved in school-based tobacco and vaping prevention programs.

For more information, visit: CANADA.CA/VAPING

