



October 11, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Vaping

Further to my May 13, 2019 correspondence (posted on the School District website www.sd23.bc.ca under Documents and Publications), with the recent media reports and medical experts' opinions, the Central Okanagan School District continues to have serious concerns about the impacts of vaping on human health.

As a result, the following steps have been taken by the Board of Education:

1. The Board of Education has met with local municipal governments to express concern about the development of Bylaws that prevent advertising and targeting sales to young minors.
2. At the April 2019 British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) Annual General Meeting, the Central Okanagan Board of Education put forward the following motion which was passed:
THAT: BCSTA urge the provincial and federal governments to support tougher regulations on the sale to minors of ecigarettes and vapour products, for example as outlined in the proposed Vulnerable Adolescents Protection from ECigarettes (VAPE) Act 2019, including banning of the sale of products which are marketed specifically to young people.
3. At the October 9, 2019 Central Okanagan Board of Education Public Meeting, the Board approved the following motion:
THAT: The Board of Education write a letter to all Members of Parliament candidates in the Central Okanagan School District ridings asking them how, if elected as a Member of Parliament, they would address the serious danger that vaping poses to children and, in particular, the marketing of vaping products to children;
AND THAT: The Board of Education write letters to local MLAs, the provincial government, and all the municipal governments in the Central Okanagan.

The Central Okanagan Public Schools Health Promotion Schools staff continue their focus to educate our middle school students about the risks associated with 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.

We would like to remind you of the following:

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?

I encourage you to speak with your child or youth to ensure they understand the serious health risks associated with this activity. 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

