



24 November 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

Vaping

Maiden Erlegh School in Reading, like many other schools in the area, has seen a small spike in incidents involving students vaping. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the issue, give you resources if you feel your child is involved in this kind of behaviour, as well as alert you to possible repercussions if your child engages in vaping.

We take this issue very seriously due to the negative health effects that this can have on students and often find that our parents are often not aware of the risks around vaping. Vaping is the act of inhaling a vapour produced by an electronic vaporiser or e-cigarette. The vapour can contain nicotine and other substances, which is concerning. The liquids that are vaporised come in many different flavours and might even smell fruity. For example, many of the flavours of these liquid concentrates, or 'vape juices', are sweet and even have names such as cinnamon roll, marshmallow, grape, strawberry, bubble gum, lemonade and cookies.

Vapes/e-cigarettes come in all different shapes. Some common styles we see look like a thick pen, a stylus for an iPad, a flash drive, or a small flask with a round chimney coming off the top. The devices are very small and can easily be hidden on a person or blend in with normal backpack items. Like cigarettes, stores cannot sell vaping items to people under the age of 18.

Vaping has not been around long enough for us to know how it affects the body over time. But health experts are reporting serious lung damage in people who vape, including some deaths. Vaping puts nicotine into the body.

Nicotine is highly addictive and can:

- slow brain development in kids and teens and affect memory, concentration, learning;
- affect self-control, attention, and mood;
- increase the risk of other types of addiction as adults.

E-cigarettes also:

- irritate the lungs;
- may cause serious lung damage and even death;
- can lead to smoking cigarettes and other forms of tobacco use.

Six signs that your child is vaping:

- Unusual items in their bags – vaping devices have many parts including detachable tanks, batteries, chargers and some are like USB devices;
- Sweet smells – 73% of teens prefer fruit flavour vaping, so smelling sickly sweet fruit aromas is likely to be a strong sign;
- Changes in taste or thirstier – vaping dries the mouth and so an increase in drinking is a potential sign;
- Shortness of breath – as with smoking, it is thought that vaping affects the lungs and

will lead to shortness of breath. If they are sporty this will become clear during training and matches;

- Nosebleeds – vaping also dries out the nostrils as the vaping gas is exhaled. This can lead to nosebleeds;
- Changes in their behaviour – during the teen years their behaviour will inevitably change, however, taking nicotine, and becoming addicted further affects emotional control.

As a Level 4 behaviour (please refer to our Behaviour Policy on our website) we take the possession and use of vapes/e-cigarettes very seriously. There are a range of sanctions available to the school and we are aiming to inform you of these so we can work with you.

If we do find a vape on or being used by your child you will be informed. In addition to the sanction imposed by the school, we will also offer support services in terms of a referral to the school nursing service, who has agreed to see students and ensure they understand the dangers and support them with giving up.

We hope that you find this letter informative and understand our concerns about this potentially harmful issue. Our goal is to partner with you to support our students in making positive decisions for themselves and their future. We encourage you to have a conversation with your child about this topic.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CB' followed by a stylized flourish.

Miss C Burns

Senior Assistant Headteacher