



Tomlinscote School

8th June 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Approximately a year ago, I wrote to everyone in the Tomlinscote community highlighting that we were starting to see that vapes were being brought into school by a handful of students and being used in our toilet cubicles. Nationally, this is now a huge issue impacting teenagers and every week in the press there is a new article written about the problem of vaping. I thought it was important to help our parental community become more educated about what vapes look like, what the impacts of vaping are upon children and what the school stance is on this prohibited item.

Vapes, or e-cigarettes, are devices that enable users to inhale nicotine in vapour, generated by heating a liquid (e-liquid), rather than smoke.

I need to highlight that **vapes are a banned item** and should never be brought or used in school at any time. It is also illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to buy a vape.

What do they look like?

Here are some photos of what to look out for as they can be very small and look like something that would usually be in a pencil case. They vary a great deal in size and shape. The design and marketing seem strongly targeted at children and young people.

Please can you check that your child does not have this item in their bag.



Impact of using vapes

There is still a lack of research about usage and impact. However, this is starting to change and the latest research shows that regular use among children aged 11-17 years increased from 3.3% in 2021 to 9-14% in 2022. More than one in five (22%) of 11-15 year olds had reported to have used vapes in 2021 in England.

Vapes are a relatively new product; they aren't risk free and their long-term impacts are not known. A recent BBC article (25th May 2023) states that "Vapes confiscated from school pupils contain high levels of lead, nickel and chromium. Used vapes gathered at Baxter College in Kidderminster were tested in a laboratory. The results showed children using them could be inhaling more than twice the daily safe amount of lead, and nine times the safe amount of nickel".

[Vaping: High lead and nickel found in illegal vapes - BBC News](#)

Some vapes have THC oil within them. THC is the main psychoactive compound found in marijuana and the substance that makes you feel "high". There are concerns that this can have an impact upon lungs, mood and cause addiction. So many vapes are distributed illegally and are reported to contain many different materials that students are unaware of.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health state that the "harms of vaping are, as yet, not fully established but there are concerns regarding acute toxicity, especially when misused, and risks of adverse health outcomes including addiction". It also states that "there is growing evidence that vapes are becoming a gateway product to nicotine addiction amongst young people and that young non-smokers who use vapes are more likely than non-users to take up smoking".

Some research articles have highlighted the link between vaping and mental health concerns such as depression, impulsivity and anxiety disorder.

Here are a few links to BBC articles in the last few weeks:

[Teen vaping is new pandemic, Bolton head teacher warns - BBC News](#)

[Vaping: Tighter rules calls after doubling in children using vapes - BBC News](#)

[Vaping: Young people reveal fears about the habit - BBC News](#)

[Vaping: Guernsey parents urged to 'start conversations' with children - BBC News](#)

The school takes a strong stance on this issue and we are doing the following:

- Informing the police if we are made aware of specific shops selling vapes to under-aged people.
- Toilets are regularly checked by staff and we will continue to do this in the future.
- We will be adapting some of our toilets and will investigate the viability of vape sensors.
- If we believe a student has a vape in school, their bag will be searched and parents informed.
- If a student is caught with a vape, they will be suspended for a period of time and parents called into school.
- We will continue to educate students about the implications of vaping based upon current research.

This is one pdf that I came across to support parents and carers and to encourage conversations with their child about vaping.

<https://www.gov.im/media/1379106/11435-sfs-a5-4pp-vaping-parent-and-carers-21-sp-200323.pdf>

Like all secondary schools, we are having to deal with this issue more than ever before and it is totally unacceptable. I will continue to speak to students through the assemblies and I will be absolutely clear that there will be a very firm response if our rule is not adhered to in the future. Please have a discussion with your child about this issue around the dinner table; please ensure your child does not bring a vape to school and is aware of the implications of vaping. I hope you find this information and the links useful.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Major
Principal