

18th January 2024

Serious safeguarding concern: Vaping and Cali-Pens

Dear Parents / Carers

You will undoubtedly have seen reports in the news recently about the impact of vaping on young people, both in the community and in schools across the country. The data from ASH shows that many young people do not vape, 20% say they have tried it, and far fewer are regularly vaping.

However, we feel it is important to take a proactive response and ensure both our students, and their parents/carers, are aware of both the dangers of vaping and the serious dangers of vapes laced with illegal substances.

We will be delivering assemblies to students to share the facts on the potential risks of vaping to ensure our students feel empowered to make informed choices, should they feel pressured to partake in vaping or are regularly choosing to do so. Whilst the Government promotes vaping to those over 18 as a safer alternative to smoking tobacco, it is not licensed for those under 18, as it poses a risk to young people. In addition, vaping is not permitted in school, and we strongly suggest all parents and carers do not buy vapes for their children. Students will be informed that any vape with more than 2ml of liquid, approximately more than 600 puffs, is illegal and therefore, unlicensed. Vapes containing over 600 puffs are often imported illegally and therefore, the person buying them has no idea what they contain; studies have shown that many illegal vapes contain nickel and even lead. If your child does vape and you are aware of this, we encourage you to have an honest conversation with them to check the content of their vapes, especially if it is unlicensed and they are unsure where it originated from.

It has come to light that some young people are now adding illegal substances to their vapes, which are causing extreme reactions and making them very unwell. The safety of our students is our number one priority, which is why we are bringing this to your attention.

The two main illegal substances that young people are adding to their vapes are THC and Spice. They are sold in liquid form and can be added to any type of vape. THC is the main active ingredient in cannabis and Spice is a synthetic form of cannabis. These illegal drugs, often referred to as “juice” or “oil”, can be contained in a small plastic bottle / phial. The dangers of THC and Spice are well known and doctored vapes of this nature were responsible for 68 deaths in the USA last year.

Young people are obtaining these drugs illegally by purchasing them online (including Snapchat), meeting people face to face or possibly even buying them from shops. You will understand that this poses a serious risk to our students.

Please also be aware that in recent weeks, there have been some instances of young people in London school collapsing /passing out after the use of a vape called a **Cali Pen** and this is now spreading up through the surrounding counties. A *Cali Pen* is a disposable vape pen containing CBD (cannabidiol).

There is little research around the long-term effect of any vape and obviously it is illegal to sell vapes to anyone under 18. The Police are in the process of trying to find out the source of these *Cali Pens* so that they can be removed from circulation and offenders prosecuted. We ask parents / carers to alert their children to the danger of these vapes and to alert the police if you have any information about *Cali Pens*. Obviously, carrying or using a vape in school is not allowed and all our students know this.

As well as delivering assemblies on this new vaping fad, we are also working closely with the Police to ensure we can keep your children safe.

We ask for your understanding as we work with outside agencies to support our community and raise awareness of this serious new risk to our young people. We hope that after reading this you will have frank conversations with your child to help them understand the severity and dangers of vaping and laced vapes. If you would like support for your child to help with nicotine, or other substance addiction, or further guidance on approaching this topic with your child, please contact welfare on welfare@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk.

Yours faithfully



Kate Wibberley
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