



The Ripley Academy and Sixth Form



Executive Headteacher: **Mrs H Frost-Briggs BA (Hons)**
We are **AMBITIOUS**. We are **COMMITTED**. We are **PROUD**.

24th April 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Vaping

Please remember:
Children vaping is against the law
– the legal age for vaping in the UK is 18 years old

We have recently been made aware of an increase in the number of incidents in our local community where children and young people are being exposed to potentially harmful substances using electronic cigarettes and/or vapes.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the issue, provide you with access to helpful resources if you feel that your child is involved in this kind of behaviour, as well as to alert you to the potential consequences should your child(ren) be found to be in possession or use of electronic cigarettes/vapes on school premises. We take this issue very seriously due to the negative health effects vaping can have on our students and often find that our parents/ carers are often not aware of the risks around vaping.

Vaping is the act of inhaling a vapour produced by an electronic vaporizer or e-cigarette. The vapour can contain nicotine and other substances, which is concerning. There have also been reports in other Local Authority areas of children and young people experimenting with THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) vaping. THC is the psychoactive compound in cannabis and is illegal in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, there have been reports of young people becoming unwell and needing medical attention after using vapes. The liquids that are vaporized 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, bubblegum, lemonade and cookies.

Vapes can come in a variety of different forms, shapes and sizes. Some common styles of vapes include ones which look like a thick pen or highlighter pen. These devices are usually very small and can be concealed on a person or blend in with normal school equipment, consequently they can be easily mistaken or missed.

Like cigarettes, shops and other retailers cannot sell vaping items to people under the age of 18. This includes the sale of vaping equipment, including liquids and devices. It is, therefore, clear that young people under the age of 18 should not be purchasing or be in possession of alternative nicotine products such as vapes. Whilst the sale of items as detailed above is illegal, students have reported to us that they are able to acquire devices online or from older siblings, friends and unfortunately in some instances even parents and carers.

When students vape, it can be due to an addiction to nicotine they have developed, a peer pressure issue, or they are simply curious and want to try it out. If this is the case, we would like to guide you to the following websites which provide helpful information to support you as parents/carers in raising this important issue with your child(ren):



- ASH (Action on Smoking and Health): <https://ash.org.uk/fact-sheets/>
- Know the Risks: <https://ash.org.uk/fact-sheets/>
- Kids Health: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/e-cigarettes.html>

Naturally, we will also continue our work in school to educate students regarding the dangers of vaping and the legality surrounding this.

I am sure that you will agree that the possession and use of vapes on school premises is something that we simply cannot tolerate, consequently, we will view this in the same way as incidents of smoking or possession of smoking paraphernalia. Anyone who is found to be in the possession of paraphernalia, smoking or vaping, will have the said items confiscated (these will not be returned, they will be handed to the police) and will receive appropriate sanctions in line with our Behaviour Policy. Students suspected of vaping will be searched, with suspicious behaviour in toilets likely to be sanctioned. Incidents of students smoking/vaping will be addressed with a more severe sanction.

There are ways you can help protect your children. These include:

- Talking to your child about why smoking/vaping are harmful for them. It is never too late to have the conversation.
- Learning about the different types of e-cigarettes available and the risks associated with using these products. We recommend our parents and carers have a look at images of vapes online to familiarise what they can look like.
- Setting a good example by being tobacco free.
- Knowing what **your child** is bringing to school and taking out with them when in the community. Regularly checking bags, blazers, coats and bedrooms to ensure things are not being hidden or concealed.
- Reporting those who are selling cigarettes and e-cigarettes to minors. You can do this by completing the online Whisper button [SWGfL Whisper - Report](#)

I hope you share and understand our concerns about this potential harmful issue.

Whilst the letter is directed at school behaviour, we urge you to reflect on your child's conduct outside of school as we are aware of increased usage in the community when young people think no one is watching.

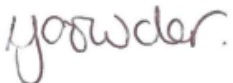
We always aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to help support our students in making positive decisions for themselves and their future.

I would urge you as strongly as I can to discuss this information with your child(ren) in order that they are fully aware of the situation.

Young people don't always make the right choices because of their age and experience, and we must work together if we are to keep our young people safe.

With many thanks for your support and cooperation.

Kind regards



Mrs L Crowder
Deputy Head