

Youth Vaping Toolkit For Parents and Carers

Healthy Schools Essex

Developed for the Essex Youth Vaping Pilot Programme



Commissioned by

What is Vaping?

A vape, also known as an e-cigarette, is an electronic device that simulates tobacco smoking. E-liquid or 'vape juice', typically containing nicotine, flavourings, and other chemicals, is heated into an aerosol which is used to inhale nicotine.

In the UK it is illegal to sell nicotine vaping products to anyone under the age of 18 or for adults to buy them on behalf of a young person

Why might my child vape?

- Peer Influence and Social Pressure
- Perception of Vaping (being less harmful)
- Marketing and Advertising
- Accessibility and Convenience
- Curiosity and Risk taking
- Nicotine Addiction
- Lack of Awareness (about long term risks)

Signs a young person may be vaping

- Have stomach pain, diarrhoea, sickness, bad wind or a weakened bladder
- Coughing lots, often having a cold or a sore throat
- Have nose bleeds, headaches or a fever
- Experience tooth loss, develop a receding gumline and have cold sores
- Have spotty and prematurely wrinkly skin
- Be experiencing poor sleep
- Be jittery, struggle to concentrate or pay attention and may show signs of memory loss
- A change in academic achievement due to “brain fog” and slower brain processing



If your young person is vaping.....

Asking questions like, “What do you enjoy about vaping” or “How does vaping make you feel?” can help you to understand more about your child’s needs and why they have chosen to vape. This can open up conversations about healthier, more positive ways you can support your child with meeting their needs.

Vaping - some key facts

- Nicotine addiction can affect mental health and worsen feelings of anxiety and depression. It can also affect self-control, attention and the ability to learn, especially in developing brains
- UK statistics reveal a significant increase in youth vaping
- Vaping is not for children and young people. Nicotine interferes with normal teen brain development and their bodies are more sensitive to its effects
- Vapes often contain cancer causing chemicals, it is not just scented water vapour. Some vapes may even contain cannabis or other illicit substances
- Sharing a vape with friends can spread bacteria and viruses present in saliva, such as those responsible for the common cold, flu and herpes
- Vapes can cause lung damage and can lead to an increased risk of heart attacks, strokes and cancer
- The longer-term effects of vaping are still unknown
- Nicotine is a highly addictive substance that triggers the release of dopamine associated with pleasure and reward in the brain This can lead to repeated use and dependence
- A quarter of 11 to 15-year-olds have tried vaping

Having a conversation about vaping might be tricky, but is always a good idea!

Finding the right time to talk. Picking a calm moment to ask your child about vaping in a non-confrontational way will help you learn about your child's involvement without defensiveness. This could mean taking the opportunity when you see someone vaping or you're passing a vape shop, watching vaping related storylines on TV or hearing it stories in the news. Finding a way so that your child doesn't feel like you are accusing them of something, may mean they are more likely to be open and talk with you.

Think about...

- Finding out the facts about vapes before you start the conversation.
- How you will react if your child admits to vaping.
- Listening to what your child has to say and avoid making assumptions.
- Talking about the different reasons why young people may vape.
- Setting boundaries so they know what you will and won't accept.

If the conversation fails...

- **Go back to it.** Take a break and go back to it another time. These conversations can feel really challenging but they are important, so don't give up!
- **Call on your friends, family or wider network.** If you or your young person don't want to talk, why not ask someone else they have a relationship with or they respect to have a chat with them.
- **Remind them that you are on their side.** It is important to let your child know that you are there for them and you care about them. Having supportive conversations will make it easier for them to talk to you when they have questions or need advice in the future.
- **Check what else is going on.** Your child may be using vaping to distract from negative feelings. Gently explore what else could be happening in their lives.

Getting support

You don't have to cope with the situation on your own. If you're trying to support your child to quit vaping, there are trusted places and people to reach out to for help. GP's can assess nicotine dependence and offer clinical support. Schools offering drop-in sessions with a School Nurse can provide confidential advice on vaping.

Organisations:

NHS Better Health Free tools, information and support.

<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/help-others-quit/young-people-and-vaping/>

FRANK Information about vaping, law and health.

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/vapes>

CHILDLINE Advice and help for young people to give up vaping.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/drugs-alcohol-smoking/vaping/>

Action for Children Advice for parents worried about vaping.

<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/feelings-behaviour/safety-wellbeing/im-worried-about-my-child-vaping/>

Vaping facts leaflet for parents & carers

<https://smokefreesheffield.org/get-involved/campaigns/vaping-the-facts/>;

Online Resources:

Supporting Parents | Vaping Facts

<https://vapingfacts.health.nz/vapefree-schools/supporting-parents.html>

Advice for parents worried about a child or teenager vaping

<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/feelings-behaviour/safety-wellbeing/im-worried-about-my-child-vaping/>

Quit Vaping | Smokefree Teen

<https://teen.smokefree.gov/quit-vaping>

Citizens Advice

Selling vapes to under 18's is illegal. To report a shop for selling underage please contact Citizens Advice Consumer Service **0808 223 1133**.

Get in touch

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service

t: 0300 247 0013

w: www.essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk