

Mount St. Joseph

"A community of Learners, Believers and Friends"

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Dear parents and carers

Smoking & Vaping

We have a new pandemic growing in our society effecting young people up and down the country. You will have no doubt seen the media about e cigarettes and the dangers they pose to young people.

We write to share our concerns regarding students smoking, including electronic cigarettes (vaping). Students have been observed smoking/vaping outside in the local community before and after school.

One of our concerns is that we are finding increasing numbers of young people acquiring 'vapes' from different places, i.e., shops, the internet or people selling 'vapes'. These are often initially cheaper than high street prices but can be laced with LSD, GHB, MDMA (ecstasy), ketamine, kratom, opioids, including fentanyl and marijuana (THC/CBD). If you become aware of this, please report directly to trading standards or the police via a 101 call.

Smoking, which now includes the use of electronic cigarettes (vaping) is prohibited on all school premises. We all must work together to support our students and keep them safe. We will continue to educate students in school through assemblies, Personal Development Time and RSHE lessons. Please could we ask for your support by reading the following information and speaking to your child/ren.

Health risks

Smoking is a major risk factor for a variety of diseases and conditions including:

- coronary heart disease: 10 times higher risk than non-smokers
- stroke and peripheral vascular disease
- lung cancer: 20 times higher risk than non-smokers
- other cancers such as stomach, bladder, mouth and cervical cancer
- emphysema
- osteoporosis
- type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome.

Electronic cigarettes (E-cigarettes) can contain high levels of nicotine. Adolescence is a critical period for brain development and exposure to nicotine can have long-term health consequences, impacting memory, attention and learning.

E-cigarettes (Vape) are often available in different flavours which can be appealing to young people and may expose them to chemicals and toxins such as formaldehyde, heavy metals, particulate matter and flavouring chemicals, at levels that have the potential to cause adverse health effects.

Sometimes vapes are disguised as USBs, pens, highlighters and cosmetics.

Second-hand smoke - exposure can cause disease and premature death in children and adults who do not smoke. Specifically, children exposed to second-hand smoke experience a range of upper and lower respiratory illnesses and symptoms such as colds and flu, cough, phlegm production, wheezing and pneumonia.

Your support

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/carers have a look at images of vapes online to familiarise what they can look like.
- Setting a good example by being tobacco free.
- Reporting those who are selling cigarettes and e-cigarettes to minors.

We ask for your support in this matter. Please talk to your child about the content of this letter and the dangers of smoking e cigarettes. Please also regularly check their bags and pockets for e-cigarettes.

Thank you for your support with this serious matter.

Your sincerely,

Mr P Draper

Deputy Headteacher
Designated Safeguarding Lead