



Venerable Bede Church of England Academy

Northern Lights Learning Trust

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Dear Parent/Carer,

Vapes:

Recently, the government released a consultation document which is set to outline plans for dealing with vapes and ensuring they are no longer targeted at children. Health ministers are set to act after concerns that companies are marketing vapes to appeal to children. Vaping is the act of inhaling a vapour produced by an electronic vaporiser (vape) or e-cigarette. The vapour can contain nicotine and other substances. 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.

Although it is illegal to sell vapes or vaping equipment to anyone under the age of 18, pupils have reported to us that they are able to acquire and use vapes and vaping equipment. Vapes pose a significant risk to the health of children and the use of vapes on academy premises is something that we can not tolerate. 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 e-cigarettes and/or vapes.

What we will do:

We recognise that this is not an issue specific to any one school but rather a risk that exists within communities and local areas impacting on all schools. We will continue to educate students regarding the dangers of vaping and the legality surrounding this and we will remind students of our respective behaviour policies and the list of prohibited items. When students have been found in possession of a prohibited item, a strong sanction is always applied. Therefore, should a pupil be found vaping on school site, it will be treated in the same way as smoking and they will face sanctions deemed appropriate by the Headteacher which could lead to a suspension. Pupils who are seen vaping while wearing the school uniform will be isolated and phone calls home will be made. The academy may put educational sessions in place to help pupils to understand the dangers of vaping and smoking. **Please note that we will report possession of any illegal substances to the police.**



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What can you do?

- Know and understand the risks presented by electronic cigarettes and vapes. These risks are real, and they need to be understood particularly as the availability of these products has grown significantly in a short period of time
- Recognise that this is an issue within our local area
- Talk to your child openly about these risks to ensure that they are well informed and have clear guidance that these products are to be avoided
- Get in touch with your GP if you require medical guidance regarding your child
- Get in touch with your child's school and let them know if you have concerns.

What steps can be taken if your child is vaping:

Sadly, we must recognise that some young people may develop an addiction to nicotine and may see the use of a vape as being a safer alternative to smoking cigarettes. They may also have succumbed to peer pressure or simply be curious and want to try vaping. If this is the case, we would like to guide you to the following websites which provide helpful information to support you to raise this important issue with your child:

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

I hope that you welcome this letter in the spirit with which it is intended and that you share and understand our shared concerns about this potentially harmful issue. We have got to be open about the risks involved and we need to be able to talk to our children so that no topics are 'off limits' and so we encourage you to have a conversation with your child about this subject matter. Should you have any concerns, please do contact your child's Head of Year and they will be more than willing to provide you with additional support and guidance. This is a growing issue, and it will take a community response to keep all our children safe from harm.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. A. Chapman-Jones

Assistant Headteacher Pastoral



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