

E-cigarettes and vaping information for parents and carers

We are aware of concerns raised by schools and parents regarding the use of e-cigarettes by young people. We are therefore sharing information about e-cigarettes to help you be aware of these, and how to support your child if you know or suspect they are using them.

What are e-cigarettes?

E-cigarettes are also known as e-cigs, vape pens, vapes, vape sticks, personal vaporisers, mods, tanks, and e-hookahs. They are electronic devices that heat a liquid (or vape juice) - often containing nicotine, propylene glycol or vegetable glycerine, water, and flavourings - into a vapour that is inhaled into the mouth. E-cigarettes typically consist of a mouthpiece, battery and cartridge or tank containing e-liquid solution. Using an e-cigarette is known as 'vaping.'

There is clear advice that vapes should not be used by children, or those who do not currently smoke, as nicotine is an addictive substance.



What should you know as a parent or carer?

- E-cigarettes are designed to aid existing cigarette smokers quit smoking. They should therefore only be used by adults as a quitting tool, or as a less harmful alternative to smoking.
- E-cigarettes and vaping products containing nicotine should not be sold or given to anyone under the age of 18. The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 prohibits e-cigarettes to be sold or given to anyone under the age of 18.
- Although a small number of e-cigarettes claim to be nicotine free, it is estimated that one in three vapes being sold may have incorrect packaging and contain higher levels of nicotine or other substances which are not described on the label.
- Using e-cigarettes is less harmful than smoking cigarettes but can still lead to nicotine addiction. They can also increase exposure to harmful chemicals. Reported side effects of using e-cigarettes include vomiting, nausea, coughing, shortness of breath, mouth irritation and asthma. Defective products may catch fire or explode, leading to burns and injuries.
- Nicotine is in most e-cigarettes. Nicotine is a highly addictive chemical. It can affect brain development in young people, impacting their learning, memory, concentration, and mood, causing anxiety and depression. It can also lead to addiction and physical dependence. Children and young people may become dependent on nicotine quicker than adults.
- The long-term effects of e-cigarettes are still unknown. It is difficult therefore to know the outcomes and risks of using e-cigarettes in the long term.

What you can do as a parent or carer

If you know or suspect your child is using an e-cigarette, talk to them about the risks and explain they are not designed for general use - only as a tool to quit smoking or as a less harmful alternative to smoking for adults.

If you use an e-cigarette, explain to your child that although using one is less harmful than cigarettes, they are not designed for general use by young people.

If your child is vaping as a way of managing their anxiety or stress, there are other ways they can de- stress without relying on e-cigarettes. These options include talking therapies, relaxation techniques and physical activity. There are many local services to support young people.

Information about retailers selling e-cigarettes to children and young people should be reported to Trading Standards at www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk/share-information or by calling 0300 999 6999.

Local support and information

Family Hub Service talks to you about issues affecting your family life and work closely with other organisations and services to help you get the right support. Visit www.rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk and search for 'Family Hub'.

Kooth Royal Borough is a free digital emotional wellbeing and counselling service available to young people aged 10 – 25 across the Royal Borough.

Smoke Free Teen contains lots of useful advice on vaping to help young people including tips to deal with cravings, understanding triggers and managing anxiety, stress, and the cost of vaping. Visit <https://teen.smokefree.gov/quit-vaping>

School Nurses offer advice from a health professional. Call 0300 365 6523, leave a message with your contact details, and state that it's for the attention of the School Nursing Team.

YPSMS Service is part of the Family Hub team and is a substance misuse service for young people. It helps young people understand the risks and harm of taking drugs or drinking alcohol. It also offers advice and information to parents and carers. Email familyhubs@achievingforchildren.org.uk

