

SAFEGUARDING BULLETIN

Issue 7 (April 2023)



Welcome to our seventh ALNS safeguarding bulletin where we are hoping to share with you the latest knowledge, tips and support services for various issues in order that we can work together to keep your children safe. Each bulletin will focus on a different area of safeguarding.

Key Focus – Vaping

What is it?

Vapers inhale a nicotine infused vapour from e-juice or e-liquid. This is heated by an electronic device creating the vapour which the user then inhales.

Both the Government and the NHS are clear that as a reducing smoking tool, vaping can be very beneficial, but it is absolutely not risk free – all health bodies advise people who have never smoked – do not take up vaping – it is a “quit tool, not a cool tool!”

IT IS ILLEGAL TO SELL VAPES TO UNDER 18s OR TO BUY VAPES FOR UNDER 18s.

Unfortunately Vapes are often marketed and packaged to appeal to children - with fruity flavours and brightly coloured. In addition, they are designed to be disguised from teachers and parents – to look like highlighters and USB sticks for example.

Admiral Lord Nelson School is a smoking and vape free site.

The risks

More is becoming known about the risks of vaping although as they have only been around since 2007, the long-term effects are simply waiting to be discovered.

- Nicotine – vapes contain nicotine – this is highly addictive and can harm brain development in adolescents (especially in the areas of attention, learning, mood and impulse control)
Source – Sarah Brown, Paediatric Respiratory Consultant quoted in the Guardian
- Harmful emissions in the vapour (diacetyl, formaldehyde, heavy metals) may be carcinogens and are certainly irritants to lungs and throat.
Source – British Heart Foundation
- Link to County Lines – various Local Authority Childrens Social Care Departments and Barnados are quoted in various media outlets concerned about this link – vapes are used as a grooming tool to encourage children into gangs – a “currency” much like mobile phones, trainers etc (see safeguarding bulletin 2 for more on this)
- How do you know what is actually in the vape?

Whilst we are on inhaling.... A note on nitrous oxide!

Also known as “laughing gas/balloons/whippits/hippie crack/noz/chargers”.

This is a colourless gas which people inhale via a balloon. The gas comes in small silver cannisters and is very dangerous as it is delivered into the body under a very high pressure. In the short term it can cause spasm of the throat muscle which can stop breathing leading to suffocation and lack of oxygen and in the long-term, issues such as B12 deficiency which can lead to nerve damage and difficulties with mobility etc.

In School Support

- We cover substance misuse and health risks as part of our Personal Development Curriculum.
- Any member of the school community – staff, student or parent can report concerns or seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Holness or her Deputy Safeguarding Lead – Mr Fenner.

How can you support your child?

Useful resources:

- <https://www.talktofrank.com>. Honest Information about drugs and alcohol, direct support and advice including where to go locally for support.
- DASS – Drug and Alcohol Support Service for Young People in Portsmouth
<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/health-and-care/health/dass-drug-and-alcohol-support-service-for-young-people>
Offers individual workers to meet with young people one to one to offer support and advice. Also, confidential drop in sessions for parents with concerns or questions.

If you have any safeguarding concerns you want to discuss at school please contact your child's tutor, their Head of House or the designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Holness.

Be aware of the signs that your child might be vaping or using nitrous oxide:

- Look for the paraphernalia – vapes – remember they might be “disguised”, silver canisters or the “crackers” used to open the cannisters which look like small torches. The fruity smell makes detection much harder than for cigarettes, but the latest NHS (digital) research shows 1 in 5 teenagers are vaping with the biggest rise in 15-year-old girls.
- Signs of addiction - having an emotional reaction to being in a situation where they are unable to vape.
- Look out for signs of grooming (see safeguarding bulletin 2 – on our website)

Talk, talk, talk!

- Talk to your child - discuss the risks - in particular that we don't know the long-term risks – smoking was once considered “cool” and risk free.

Know the law!

It is illegal for under 18s to be sold vapes or to have them bought for them.

