

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Vaping/Substance Awareness

I am writing to address a national increase in young people vaping and which is also impacting young people at Hollingworth Academy. It has been widely reported that there is a national trend which shows an increase in the number of young people using vapes and E-cigarettes and that these are frequently being brought into schools and academies.

Even more concerning are national and now [local reports](#) of the devices being brought into schools containing substances other than nicotine. Very recently news reports state that a number of children have been hospitalised following the use of a vape that contained illegal substances. It is important to understand these types of incidents could happen in any school or academy.

Whilst we continue to educate all our young people on the dangers of vaping through our RISE lessons, through one-to-one conversations with our safeguarding and pastoral teams and through the promotion of information published by Public Health England; we are understandably concerned about the potential of similar incidents occurring in our academy.

Our behaviour policy is very clear: Students **will receive a sanction** if they are found in possession of a vape, or using one, in the academy.

We understand that vaping can become a serious addiction and know it is an important part of our role as an academy to inform and support young people to avoid their reliance on these devices (see support below).

Although we wish to support our students, this must be finely balanced with our need to ensure that students are not exposed to the risks associated with vaping. Many young people buy vapes online or through unauthorised sellers and therefore they cannot be sure what is contained within the devices. As such, we feel that our obligation to safeguard **all** students outweighs the support for the individual bringing these devices into the academy or using them. **Hollingworth Academy does not permit the use of, or presence of, such devices on the academy site**; therefore, for students who do not respond to the measures we put in place or the sanctions that are applied, we will be upscaling their sanction to a suspension, an off-site disciplinary placement or the possibility of permanent exclusion. We will also be conducting randomised checks of those involved, those we suspect are involved, or those who are on the periphery of their use to ensure these devices are not on our site.

Where we have reason to suspect a vape contains any form of illegal drug, we will also be sending these devices to GMP. On this point I must be very clear; **any student bringing any illegal substances onto our academy site will face sanctions and the possibility of permanent exclusion**. Where repeated offences occur it will be dealt with in line with the academy's behaviour policy.

To support the efforts to reduce vaping on our site we are also asking students not to loiter in our toilet areas. Students have indoor spaces available at social time in the atrium. There is no reason to stand in groups within the toilet area, unless queuing to use them. By ensuring students are not loitering we can allow more students to use the facilities appropriately at social times, reducing the need for them to be used during lesson times. This is of benefit to our younger students in particular who may find it intimidating to use the facilities when groups of older students are present.

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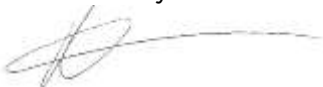
If you are a parent/carer of a child who uses a vape, it is important that you engage with the academy to address this issue. We do appreciate that vaping can be an addiction, and our starting point is always to offer support to address this. If it has become an addiction, we would recommend speaking to your GP who can offer support for cessation of vaping and smoking. Below you will find some links which may provide useful starting points for you in either understanding the issue better or supporting your child with the next steps.

- This [factsheet](#) from the National College is useful for you to understand more about vapes and vaping.
- [Talk To Frank](#) is useful, factual and informative and is a good place to signpost your teenager if they're looking for more information for themselves.
- The [NHS page for drug addiction](#) is a good starting point if you're looking for services to support your teenager.
- [This website](#) helps teens to come up with a plan to quit vaping, including some apps that you can get to track your progress.
- [A Parent's Guide to Vaping](#) - a guide designed to support parents/carers in helping them to understand what vaping is and why young people do it.
- [I'm worried about my child vaping](#) - a website which offers guidance on how to open a dialogue with your child about vaping.

We want to do everything we can to avoid the possibility of a young person being hospitalised, or worse, from the use of vape. I know that parents/carers will be in agreement with our stance and are quite rightly concerned about this issue too. Children engaging in this type of behaviour form an exceptionally small minority of our student population and it is important that parents/carers work with us to address these behaviours.

As an academy, we would encourage all parents/carers to have an open and honest discussion about the dangers of vaping, to report any additional concerns to us through your child's Year Team and to seek support for your child if they are currently using a vape. We hope to avoid escalating sanctions for young people by ensuring honest, open dialogue between home and the academy. I hope that you take reassurance from our stance, which is designed to ensure our academy community is at less risk from the adverse and potentially serious consequences of vaping in schools.

Yours faithfully



Mrs B Robinson
Senior Assistant Headteacher

"EVERYONE EXCELS EVERYDAY"



T | 01706 292800 E | info@hollingworthacademy.co.uk W | www.hollingworthacademy.co.uk
A | Cornfield Street, Milnrow, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL16 3DR

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The registered office is at Suite 1, Floor 3, Hafley Court, Buckley Road, Rochdale, OL12 9DJ