October 2021

**Safeguarding Advice – Vape-pens**

Dear families,

We are writing to inform you about a developing trend amongst young people that may pose a risk to their health and safety. There are new super-strength nicotine [vape pens](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/clubber-left-paralysed-fearing-life-21431789) that originate from America, some of which are the equivalent of smoking 125 [cigarettes](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/shiting-wang-illegal-cigarette-smuggling-21363822).

These vape pens are marketed under the name of ‘Geek Bars’, they are powerful and brightly coloured nicotine devices and are widely available in the UK, both online and in shops, and come in a range of flavours that are attractive to children including bubble gum, cola and ice cream. The basic functionality of these disposable vapes is similar to that of standard e-cigarette devices. These should not be considered as a toy, or a hobby, or in any way a novelty item; they should be used as a nicotine replacement. The disposable devices, priced from around £5, are pre-filled with 20mg of nicotine and generally last for between 500-600 inhalations before they are disposed of.

Due to the danger to health these products cause, the UK law states that the minimum age for purchase and use of any vaping product is 18. Vaping products should not be used by anyone under the age of 18. This is because the device uses a nicotine cartridge, which is not designed for those who are underage.

In light of these restrictions, it is important to discuss with your teenagers the dangers of all vaping devices. If you use one yourself, please be careful to keep it away from your child/children just in case they find their way into this product. Please discard any used vape disposables as soon as possible after use, so your child cannot access them.

Due to their bright colours (some look like a highlighter pen), child-friendly flavours and packaging, it is understandable that children will be curious about these products. It our understanding that these devices are openly being sold to underage teens in our wider community from unregulated outlets including take-away shops. There is no easy way of verifying that what should be in the product is safe. We would encourage you to have a discussion with your child about these devices, and educate them about their dangers and make them aware of risks to their health.

In school, as with all smoking related items, e-cigarettes/vape pens and associated paraphernalia are banned items. Students who are found in possession of such items in school will face a serious sanction. As their possession by children is illegal, any students who brings such items to school to sell or distribute to others, may find themselves in receipt of a suspension or permanent exclusion.

As always, thank you for working with us to keep our young people safe. If you have any concerns raised by this letter please do not hesitate to contact the school using the details above.

Yours faithfully,