

# Lisnagarvey High School

Warren Gardens  
Lisburn  
BT28 1HN



*School Values*  
*Mutual Respect*  
*Success for All*  
*Meeting the Needs of Individuals*  
*Caring and Responsible*

*Principal – Jim Sheerin*

Ref CJ/CB

30 August 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In June 2021, the school issued a letter in relation to the unregulated vaping of substances. Police have received a number of reports of young people who suffered a reaction as a result of vaping substance-infused oil. These incidents pose a significant risk to their health and are very concerning.

We have highlighted some important points as follows -

- Some vape oils can contain a synthetic drug often referred to by its street name, 'Spice,' as well as THC and other illegal substances.
- Labels on vape oils can often be inaccurate and misleading.
- Synthetic cannabinoids (Spice) are a Class B controlled drug, and it is therefore illegal to supply or possess them.
- The addition of synthetic cannabinoids and other substances to vape oils can pose significant health concerns and also poses a high risk of poisoning.
- The consumption of such products has at times led to the person experiencing breathing difficulty, chest pains, palpitations, tremors, seizures, collapse and unconsciousness. Some reactions can take place quickly after the substance is inhaled and require immediate medical attention. In cases of extreme poisoning, it can be fatal. A significant detrimental impact on the mental health of users has also been noted with the onset of mood swings, anxiety and paranoia.

At Lisnagarvey High School we have recently seen an increase in the number of young people who are vaping and bringing vapes on to the school premises and consequently being suspended due to their actions.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the issue, provide you with access to helpful resources, as well as to alert you to the potential consequences should your child/children be found to be in possession or use of electronic cigarettes/vapes on the school's premises.

As you are aware we take this issue very seriously due to the negative health effects vaping has on young children and impact on missing their education due to suspensions.

Shops and other retailers cannot sell vaping items to people under the age of 18. This includes the sale of vaping equipment, including liquids and devices. It is, therefore, clear that young people under the age of 18 should not be purchasing or be in possession of alternative nicotine products such as vapes. Whilst the sale of items as detailed above is illegal, pupils have reported to us that they are able to acquire devices online or from older siblings, friends and unfortunately in some instances even Parents/Carers.

We do, however, recognise that a small number of pupils may have developed 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.

The dangers of vaping in schools are significant. Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and can have harmful effects on developing brains. Some do not, but they come in fruit or other flavours designed to appeal to children and are arguably even more harmful than nicotine, being filled with carcinogenic and highly toxic chemicals.

There is also a risk that students may experiment with other substances, such as marijuana, THC or Spice by vaping these substances in e-cigarettes.

**As we are unsure as to what substance is being vaped, we MUST insist on no e-cigarettes in school. In accordance with our Drugs Education Policy, pupils can be searched when we have a concern for their well-being or suspect the potential use of substances. Please note that we will report possession of any illegal substances to the police.**

I am sure that you will agree that the possession and use of vapes on the school's premises is something that we simply cannot tolerate, consequently, we will view this in the same way as incidents of smoking or possession of smoking paraphernalia.

**Anyone who is found to be in the possession of paraphernalia linked to smoking or vaping will have the said items confiscated and will face suspension.**

We are keen to circulate our message around Parents/Guardians to ensure you are fully informed of the dangers young people may face. We feel it is particularly important for you to be fully aware of the associated dangers, as well as how to seek support for your child if required.

Naturally, we will also continue our work in the school to educate pupils regarding the dangers of vaping and the legality surrounding this.

I hope that you welcome this letter in the spirit with which it is intended and that you share and understand our concerns about this potential 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'. We encourage you to have a conversation with your child about this subject matter, so they fully understand the consequences of their actions.

We will continue to work in partnership with Parents/Carers to help support our pupils in making positive decisions for themselves and their future.

You will find our new Anti-Smoking and Vaping Policy on the school's website, and should you have any concerns, please do contact the school and we will be more than willing to provide you with additional support and guidance. Thank you for helping to keep our schools smoke and vape free.

- Know the Risks: <http://www.ash.org.uk>
- Kids Health: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/e-cigarettes.html>

Yours Sincerely,



Miss C Johnston

(Vice Principal)