



Lisnagarvey High School

Circular No 2024/02

**LISNAGARVEY HIGH SCHOOL
ANTI-SMOKING
& VAPING POLICY**

J Sheerin

C Johnston

August 2024

Contents

Aims	3
Introduction	3
The Challenges of Stopping Vaping in School	4
The Health and Safeguarding Risks	4
Policy Strategy	5
Staff	5
Visitors, Contractors and Community Users	5
Parents and Carers	6
Events	6
Students Who Fail to Adhere to this Policy	6
Communication of the Policy	6

Vaping in schools is a growing problem that poses significant safeguarding challenges. It has become a serious problem in recent years advocating the **Tobacco and Vapes Bill** which was introduced in the Commons on the 20th of March 2024.

This bill fulfils a series of government proposals to create a 'smokefree generation' and reduce the appeal and availability of vapes to young people, thus making it an offence anywhere in the UK to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009.

It aims to restrict the sale and marketing of e-cigarettes to children, and reduce the appeal and availability of vapes to young people. The bill includes the following proposals:

- Prohibiting the sale of tobacco to people born on or after January 1, 2009
- Banning the sale and supply of disposable vapes
- Preventing vapes from being branded and advertised to appeal to children
- Strengthening enforcement of new laws

At Lisnagarvey High School, our purpose is to educate children so they can live great lives. This education is not limited to the academic knowledge gained in the classroom but includes supporting young people to lead healthy lifestyles.

According to **Action on Smoking and Health** in 2023, 20.5 per cent of children had tried vaping, up from 15.8 per cent in 2022 and 13.9 per cent in 2020 before the first Covid lockdown displaying the negative impact vaping and smoking has on children's lives and the disruption it can bring to learning in schools.

Vaping has clearly superseded traditional smoking as the bigger issue in our school and it presents a different set of issues for our staff.

The act of vaping itself can be a distraction from learning and may disrupt the educational environment. It is also the case that young people who have become heavily nicotine dependent due to vaping will often find excuses to leave classes and go to the toilet to vape during lessons, meaning they are missing out on lesson time.

Nicotine withdrawal in children can also affect their mood and make it hard for them to concentrate in lessons.

It can also be the case that groups will come together to vape in toilets, which can be intimidating for other students who wish to use the facilities at break and lunch times.

If a student needs to utilise the school's toilet facilities, they MUST leave their blazers with the member of staff. This is to minimise the risk of students vaping in the toilets.

These issues pose significant challenges for safeguarding and creates a range of problems that we must address.

The Challenges of Stopping Vaping in School

One of the biggest challenges with vaping in schools is that it can be difficult to detect. E-cigarettes produce little smoke, and the vapour quickly dissipates, making it hard for teachers and staff to know if a student is vaping.

This is compounded by the fact that e-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes, most of which pupils can easily hide in their pocket or school bag.

The Health and Safeguarding Risks

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.

If a student is found with an e-cigarette on their person, they will be suspended.

Moreover, vaping in school poses serious safeguarding issues. Young people who are using e-cigarettes are at risk of becoming addicted to nicotine, which can have lifelong consequences. They may also be vulnerable to exploitation by older students or outside individuals who provide them with e-cigarettes or other substances.

Lisnagarvey High School is being challenged daily by vaping. It is difficult to prove suspicions of vaping and the size of vapes means that they are more easily secreted. We also have situations with students selling and sharing their vapes in school, creating new issues for staff to deal with.

Unfortunately, vaping has become normalised among young people. It is frightening, particularly when we don't know the long-term impact on their health.

Lisnagarvey High School regards itself as a health-promoting organisation and as such seeks to:

- Protect the staff, students, community and visitors from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke and vaping
- Provide a healthy environment for staff and students
- Acknowledge the educational role of the organisation in promoting healthy lifestyles and discouraging young people from starting smoking
- Help smokers of cigarettes and vaping to quit
- Promote a positive approach to anti-smoking and anti-vaping as an organisation

Lisnagarvey High School has been designated a non-smoking/non-vaping site. This policy identifies how Lisnagarvey High School will continue to maintain a vape and smoke-free environment within the school premises for the benefit of students, staff, visitors, parents and carers as well as members of the local community.

For the purposes of this policy smoking is defined as any tobacco-based product or e-cigarettes and vaping.

Lisnagarvey High will continue to encourage and support students to not smoke through gatherings or any other time on the school site or outside the school premises.

Policy Strategy

Lisnagarvey High School is designated a non-smoking and non-vaping site and everyone involved with the school community is expected to adhere to the Anti-Smoking and Vaping Policy.

These groups include:

- Employees
- Students
- Parents/Carers
- Volunteers
- Governors
- Visitors
- Contractors

Students

Students are not allowed to smoke or vape at school or whilst engaged in any off-site activity connected with the school. Students should not smoke or vape whilst travelling to and from school or in the vicinity of the school (Vicinity is described as in sight of the school).

Staff

Staff are recognised as role models and as such are required not to smoke in sight of students during school business. This includes visits, trips, college fixtures etc. Staff should not smoke or vape within the immediate vicinity of the school at any time.

Visitors, Contractors and Community Users

The Anti-Smoking and Vaping Policy applies to all visitors to the school including suppliers, supply or temporary staff, members of the public using the community and training facilities and contractors. Such users should not smoke or vape within the immediate vicinity of the college at any time.

Parents and Carers

It will be requested that parents and carers adhere to the Anti-Smoking and Vaping Policy and refrain from smoking or vaping on school grounds or in the vicinity of the school.

Events

The school's Anti-Smoking and Vaping Policy applies to all social events/hirers of the school's rooms and facilities. Where events are booked by outside agencies, all parties are to be made aware of the school's Anti-Smoking and Vaping Policy.

Students Who Fail to Adhere to this Policy

Any student found smoking or vaping on school premises, in the vicinity of the school or on an off-site visit linked to the school will be **suspended**.

If a student is caught repeatedly smoking or vaping on school premises, in the vicinity of the school or on an off-site visit linked to the school, they will receive a more **extensive suspension**.

Pupils will be suspended if:

- They are seen smoking or vaping.
- They are seen with a lit cigarette or a vape in their possession.
- They are found to have vapes, vaping products (such as refills), cigarettes and/or other smoking materials (including lighters and/or nicotine/non-nicotine-based cartridge inserts) in their possession.

The school reserves the right to search any student for any prohibited items and to confiscate any material associated with vaping, smoking or the act of smoking.

Communication of the Policy

Parents are to be made aware of any changes to the school's Anti-Smoking and Vaping Policy through the school's Facebook page, Website and our Teacher/Parent App.

- New staff will be informed through induction of the school's policy
- The policy will be available on the school's Facebook page and Website to inform all prospective parents, staff, students and visitors
- Information will be shared with students through Assemblies and Contact Time
- Staff members will inform visitors as appropriate
- Clearly worded signs/posters will be located at key positions to inform visitors and community users