

AST/RCL/CWA/GHA

10 July 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

**Re: The Risks Associated with Vaping and the External Agency Support Available**

As an academy, we will always look to support our stakeholders in being aware of the dangers and associated risks that come with various chosen behaviours of young people. Therefore, ahead of the summer break, we felt it important to update you with regards the growing concern across the education sector of the risks that vaping is posing to our young people on a national scale.

Following on from our academy's focus on vaping in February 2023, we have seen a vast amount of interest from our students in ensuring they take responsibility for their actions and the many risks that vaping poses to them. Furthermore, we worked with the Local Authority to complete a survey for our students to identify those that had, were or continued to vape. This was whilst also highlighting the risks that vaping can have on their short, mid and particularly their long term health.

'Vaping' and the rise of e-vapes has become a significant public health issue, and the academy has been working with Essex County Council, the Police and other external agencies who are also all becoming increasingly concerned about the rise of 'vaping' amongst young people across the county.

This is particularly regarding the use of:

- Vape pens
- Liquids and oils,
- THC

Some of these are currently legal, however, some are illegal and the difficulty is being able to observe and know the difference between the two. Synthetic illegal substances can often be odourless and very difficult to detect due to the nature of chemicals used. They can also be quite innocently named.

Another problem with vaping is the sharing of a 'vape' with young people often having no idea whatsoever as to what they are actually inhaling, which is potentially very dangerous in itself of course. To vape from somebody else's pen is extremely dangerous – one simply does not know what substances are being inhaled into the respiratory system, and it is therefore, placing young people at an even greater level of risk. The risks are further heightened due to some of these substances when inhaled potentially leading to extreme behaviours and reactions - the national press covers heartbreaking stories on a regular basis of young people either dying or being seriously affected by such drug misuse. This was previously highlighted in our February 'Vaping Week' to ensure students were aware of some of these stories and to educate them on the potential serious risks.

It may also be helpful for parents and carers to know that we are told vape pens, liquids, oils and other such paraphernalia can be legally purchased online and via Amazon, EBay and other well-known platforms. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to monitor your child's online purchases as these accounts are often set as 'private' and what is subsequently purchased is then hidden. Furthermore, if you see a change in your child's behaviour, sleep or eating patterns, we would advise you to speak to your child about your concerns and be vigilant about the potential risks they may well be exposing themselves to.

The academy recognises the importance of educating our students when dealing with drugs related issues and constantly review, and where deemed necessary, adapt our Personal Development curriculum and assembly plans accordingly.

To further assist you, please find some extremely useful links which may be of use if you are concerned about your child's changed behaviour:

- <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/call-alert-young-people-dangers-spice>
- **Safe in Essex | The Children's Society (childrenssociety.org.uk) – EYPDAS**  
- [choices.referrals@childrenssociety.org.uk](mailto:choices.referrals@childrenssociety.org.uk)
- **Talk to Frank** is an educational site for young people and their families with lots of help and advice on all topics related to illegal substances. Their website is user-friendly with advice and education to help and support. Telephone 0300 123 66 00 or visit their website: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com).
- **Drugwise** offers information on drugs, alcohol and tobacco and have an A-Z of drugs explaining what they are and how they are used: [DrugWise](http://DrugWise)
- **The Mix** provides information and support for the under 25s covering a range of topics. You can use their helpline or web chat from 11am-11pm daily. Telephone: 0808 808 4994 or go to [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk).

We hope you have found this letter both informative and supportive and that you will take a few moments to discuss its contents with your child. Moving forward, we will of course continue to educate all students at Plume Academy of the risks posed by vaping, and very much hope our students will refrain from engaging in this risk taking behaviour which can adversely impact their health and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely



**Mr A Stoneman**  
**Vice Principal and**  
**Designated Safeguarding Lead**

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