



25 September 2023

Dear Parents & Carers,

I am sure, like me, you have been concerned about the ongoing national picture we are seeing regarding the use of vapes by young people. Schools across the country are seeing a significant and worrying increase in young people using these vapes and in some cases, parents condoning the use of them. Consequently, I wanted to write to you to highlight some of the concerns that I have and the actions we will be taking as a school to prevent this within our school community.

The content of vapes is completely unregulated and as such it is not clear what chemicals are being put into a child's system when they vape. Similarly, long term there is no reliable evidence of what this will do to a child's body system.

Vape oil is widely available and I would liken this to "dealing" in some cases. Adverse reactions including potential death are not uncommon and have been reported nationally across school forums. The most concerning vapes are those that have no smell or scent to them and are known to contain derivatives of illegal class B drugs amongst other harmful unknown chemicals. Essentially, as a school leader I am unable to tell if a vape contains non-nicotine based products or harmful chemicals such as Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol which is more commonly known as THC.

At Cleeve Park, we will be taking measures to ensure that this is not happening on site. Since schools began, the toilets have long been a place where children gather - this is sometimes due to the limited time they have at breaks to use the facilities, but may also be for less straightforward reasons. You will have seen that some schools have locked the toilets during lesson times, other schools do not allow children unaccompanied to the toilets during lessons. This is something that I have not yet done as I believe that we should have access to them. We had mitigated this to some extent by not having an entrance door to the toilet block (individual toilet stalls have doors).

However, we have noticed that some children are entering the individual toilet cubicles with friends. In order to protect your children, any students found in a toilet with another student will automatically be challenged. Any child found with a vape will automatically be excluded, and should there be a suspicion that this is more harmful than a "standard" vape, permanent exclusion. As the headteacher, I can do this on the basis of "likelihood" rather than irrefutable proof. We have signposted CCTV that shows the entrance to the toilets and this will be monitored.

I ask that you speak with your child and ensure that they fully understand the dangers of vaping and the consequences that could result if they are found to be doing this in school.

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