

# Reducing Harms Associated with Vaping in a School Setting

## DEFINITIONS:

- **Vaping** is inhaling and exhaling an aerosol produced by a vaping device, such as an electronic cigarette. Vaping does not require burning like cigarette smoking; however, heating the liquid can create harmful chemicals.
- **Vaping Devices** consist of a battery, mouthpiece, heating element (e.g. coil/atomizer), and a tank or reservoir to hold a liquid solution. They heat a liquid solution to create a vapour/aerosol. There are different types including e-cigarettes, box mods, all-in-ones and pod systems. Some are easy to identify while others look like USB drives, but they all work in a similar way.
- **Vaping Substances/E-juices/E-liquids** contain a mixture of chemicals including flavourings, propylene glycol and/or vegetable glycerin (glycerol), and often nicotine (low to very high concentrations). The label of ingredients and nicotine concentrations on the container or package may not be complete or accurate.

## CONTEXT:

- Youth vaping is a concern in schools and communities. [Data](#) indicates that 1 in 5 BC youth aged 12-19 years have used e-cigarettes in the last 30 days. With over 7,000 flavours, vaping products are marketed and appeal to youth. Preventing nicotine addiction among youth requires a comprehensive approach, including the involvement of youth, parents, educators, and healthcare providers.
- In BC, the [Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act](#) stipulates that vaping products cannot be sold to youth under 19 years and cannot be used on school grounds.

## KEY MESSAGES:

- Vaping is not recommended for youth and non-smokers.
- Vaping exposes users to [harmful chemicals](#) (some of which can damage the heart and lungs, and/or lead to cancer).
- Vaping can lead to [nicotine addiction](#). Nicotine is known to be harmful to the developing brain up to 25 years of age.
- Emerging evidence indicates that vaping may lead to smoking.
- Modifying vaping devices or using illicitly manufactured vaping products such as those containing cannabis or other ingredients is not recommended.
- Non-users can be exposed to harmful chemicals found in the second-hand vapour.
- The long-term health consequences of vaping are unknown.
- Users should monitor for symptoms of lung illness such as cough, shortness of breath and chest pain and seek medical attention if they have concerns about their health.

# Ideas for Vaping Prevention at School using a Comprehensive School Health Approach

## School Policies

- Communicate school policy, Code of Conduct and the provincial [legislation](#) through multi-channels.
- Communicate that the policy applies to field trips and visitors to school grounds.
- Obtain [signage](#) and post at school.
- Appoint a staff leader to oversee and champion vaping prevention and cessation initiatives in the school.
- Have a plan for non-compliance including providing reduction and cessation support (e.g. resources as well as alternatives to suspension such as [restorative practices/action](#)).

## Community Partnerships

- Liaise with [health authority programs](#) to provide support, education and/or training to school staff, parents and students.
- Seek support for prevention and cessation programs (e.g. DASH/Healthy Schools Grants, Health Canada micro-grants).
- Encourage youth (ages 12-19) to lead action through using grants (e.g. [McCreary Centre Society Youth Action Grants](#)).
- Encourage students to engage with community groups (e.g. school clubs, neighbourhood houses, Boys and Girls Clubs).

## VCH SUPPORT

- ✓ We offer data, vaping prevention education or training as well as resources for staff and parents.



## Physical & Social Environments

- Recommend parents and teachers start the [conversation about vaping](#) and continue it.
- Promote school/social connectedness (e.g. student ambassadors/peer mentors).
- Understand [why youth are vaping](#) in order to provide appropriate support (e.g. encourage open and compassionate dialogue among peers and trusted adults).
- Adapt any current 'smoking/vaping' areas for healthier activities (such as games/sports, community gardens, composting).
- Conduct surveillance and clean-up of school grounds re: vaping litter.

## Teaching & Learning

- Incorporate vaping education into curriculum, especially in transition years (grades 7/8).
- Discuss vaping in a balanced/objective way and [provide the facts](#).
- Share appropriate resources through youth mediums (e.g. social media).
- Teach/assist students with [healthy coping skills and stress management](#).
- Available resources include:
  - **Elementary:** [BC Lung Vaping Prevention Toolkit](#)
  - **Secondary:** [Consider the Consequences of Vaping](#), VCH PPT also available
- Support cessation through family doctor, youth clinics and [QuitNow](#).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Healthlink BC Vaping](#), [BC Ministry of Health](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Ontario Tobacco Research Unit E-cigarette Module](#), [US FDA Real Cost Campaign](#), [David Geffen School of Medicine \(UCLA, Video\)](#)