



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOLS ABOUT VAPING

WHAT ARE ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES (E-CIGARETTES, VAPES)?

Electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes (vapes) are battery operated devices that heat a liquid (e-liquid) to produce an aerosol to inhale. Using an e-cigarette is often called 'vaping'. The two main types of vapes are disposables and pod devices.

WHAT ARE THE RELATED DEPARTMENT POLICIES TO ASSIST SCHOOLS TO MANAGE INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE USE OF E-CIGARETTES AND/OR VAPING DEVICES?

Department of Education policies:

- Appendix A Department Standards for Maintaining a Smoke-Free Workplace in the WHS Procedures
- Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy
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- School guidelines and reporting procedures
- School incident management and intervention support policies.

WHAT ACTIONS ARE SCHOOLS REQUIRED TO APPLY IN THE EVENT A STUDENT IS FOUND IN POSSESSION OF, SUPPLY OF, OR USE OF A VAPING DEVICE OR E-CIGARETTE?

Step 1: Counsel the student and confirm details

- Document details and refer student to the relevant school contact e.g. Year coordinator, Student Services.
- Confirm details through discussion with student and/or other students as required.
- Staff member reinforces the school Behaviour Policy and expectations.
- Confiscate the device and store securely.

Step 2: Contact Parent/Carer

- Open a dialogue with the Parent/Carer in relation to the breach emphasising the illegal nature of possession, supply, or use of a vaping device or e-cigarette at school.
- Provide the Parent/Carer with a copy of '*The facts about vaping - for parents and carers factsheet*'.
- Parents/carers should be advised to contact a general practitioner (GP) if their child needs support to stop vaping. The WA Quitline (13 7848) is a confidential and free counselling service that can also help young people quit vaping. Quitline also offers an online chat service.

Step 3: Schedule session with student and relevant staff member for example: School Nurse, Chaplin, Year Coordinator.

- Staff member discusses with student the harms of vaping and the legal aspects. The [Guide to Support Young People to Quit Vaping](#) is a useful resource to help start the conversation.
- Provide student with a copy of '*The facts about vaping - for young people factsheet*'.

Step 4: Implement the requirements of the Student Behaviour in Public School Policy and Procedures

This may involve:

- loss of good standing
- suspension.

If suspension is applied, schools are to record this under category Category N8: Possession, use or supply of illegal substance(s) or objects.

Step 5: Report the incident and dispose of the device

- Report incidents of use through your school and system reporting.
- Dispose of the device through a waste removal service that can dispose of lithium batteries and liquid nicotine (a poison), not general waste.

DO I NEED TO CONTACT THE POLICE?

Students vaping can be managed by the school through engagement with parents.

If you suspect someone is selling vapes or e-cigarettes, you can report it to the Department of Health by emailing vape.report@health.wa.gov.au

WHERE AND WHO CAN I ACCESS SUPPORTING INFORMATION FROM?

Support for delivering prevention education, whole school drug education plans and strategies for schools is provided by the Department's Road Safety and Drug Education branch.

Students can access support from:

- Cancer Council WA's Clear the Air website: cleartheair.org.au
- Quitline (13 7848) is a confidential and free counselling service that can help young people quit smoking and vaping. Quitline also offers an online chat service.
- their General Practitioner, youth health service, and other health services for young people.
 - Headspace
 - Youth Focus
 - Alcohol and Drug Support Line
Metro: 9442 5000
Country: 1800 198 024
[LiveChat online](#)
 - Parent and Family Drug Support Line
Metro: 9442 5050
Country: 1800 653 203
 - My QuitBuddy App
- Department of Health: healthywa.wa.gov.au/articles/u_z/vaping

ARE E-CIGARETTES SAFE TO HANDLE?

Research has found that some e-liquids/vapes sold as "nicotine-free" contain nicotine. Nicotine is a highly addictive and poisonous drug.

E-liquids also pose a poisoning risk.

Reports of combustion events and burns have been reported to Worksafe WA. You can read more about this in the [Safety bulletin -01/2021 -Hazards associated with the use of e-cigarette devices.](#)

WHAT DO I DO IF I SUSPECT A STUDENT HAS SWALLOWED OR HAD SKIN CONTACT WITH LIQUID FROM AN E-CIGARETTE?

If you suspect a student has swallowed or had skin contact with liquid from an e-cigarette:

- call the WA Poisons Information Centre immediately on 13 11 26 if the student is conscious and alert; or
- call 000 for an ambulance if the student is unconscious.
- Follow your school Health Care policy.

HOW DO I DISPOSE OF AN E-CIGARETTE OR VAPING DEVICE/COMPONENT?

If you find e-cigarette devices on your school site:

- Use caution when handling the devices as they can overheat and explode causing serious burns.
- Store them in a dry place away from sunlight, heat (less than 35° Celsius) and humidity. Access more information about battery storage from [Planet Ark](#).
- Dispose of devices through a waste removal service that is capable of disposing lithium batteries and liquid nicotine (a poison). Do not place them in general waste.

Note:

- If your school has a current contract for waste removal services (for example, general rubbish bins, and battery collection), check with the contractor if they can provide a suitable solution for the removal of e-cigarettes.
- You may need to vary the existing contract to include this within its scope. For more information, refer to [Buy goods and services under \\$50,000](#).

If your current contractor does not have capability, or you do not have a contract for waste removal, you can engage directly with a supplier or contact 2 or 3 local suppliers and ask for quotes. For more information, refer to [Follow rules for buying goods and services](#).

WHAT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST CLASSROOM TEACHERS TO DELIVER PREVENTION EDUCATION ABOUT VAPING TO STUDENTS?

Access resources and information about e-cigarettes and vaping from myresources.education.wa.edu.au/vaping

This includes teaching and learning resources aligned to the Western Australian Curriculum, as well as a variety of factsheets, posters and information for teachers and schools, parents and carers, and young people.

WHAT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO INFORM STUDENTS, PARENTS/CARERS AND STAFF ABOUT E-CIGARETTES AND/OR VAPING DEVICES?

Teachers and school staff can access vaping resources and information for teachers, parents/carers and students at myresources.education.wa.edu.au/vaping. This includes teaching and learning resources aligned to the Western Australian Curriculum. The Department of Health also has factsheets on nicotine dependence and support to quit vaping for young people, parents and carers at healthywa.wa.gov.au/articles/u_z/vaping

IS VAPING ILLEGAL AND WHAT ARE THE LAWS AROUND SELLING VAPES IN WA?

E-cigarettes or vapes (with or without nicotine) can only be supplied by a registered pharmacist with a valid prescription from a medical practitioner. This means non-pharmacy retailers (e.g. tobacconists, vape shops, and convenience stores) cannot legally sell any types of vapes. For more information visit: health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Electronic-cigarettes-in-Western-Australia

Concerns relating to the sale and supply of e-cigarettes in WA can be communicated to the Department of Health via email: vape.report@health.wa.gov.au