



# 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 a vapour to inhale. Using an e-cigarette is often called 'vaping'. Vapes include both disposable e-cigarettes, such as 'Cuvies' and 'Stigs', and pod devices, such as JUUL.

## ARE E-CIGARETTES SAFE TO HANDLE?

Research has found that some e-liquids 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](#).

## 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 combust or cause burns.
- Store them in a dry place away from sunlight, heat (less than 35o 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 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 INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO INFORM STUDENTS, PARENTS/CARERS, STAFF ABOUT E-CIGARETTES AND/OR VAPING DEVICES?

Access resources and information about e-cigarettes and vaping on the [myresource.education.wa.edu.au/vaping](https://myresource.education.wa.edu.au/vaping). This includes teaching and learning resources aligned to the Western Australian Curriculum.

## 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:

- their General Practitioner, youth health service, and other health services for young people.
  - Headspace
  - Youth Focus
  - Alcohol drug support line 1800 198 024
  - Parent and Family Drug Support Line 1800 653 203

More information is available from:

- Department of Health: [https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes](https://www.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes)
- Cancer Council Western Australia: Make Smoking History website: [www.makesmokinghistory.org.au](http://www.makesmokinghistory.org.au)

Young people can be directed to the Quitline (13 7848) or online webchat for free advice and support on nicotine dependence related to smoking cigarettes as well as use of e-cigarettes.

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

It is reported that young people often purchase vapes online, from retail stores or from friends and contacts in the community. However, it is illegal in WA to sell e-cigarette devices and nicotine vaping products to anyone regardless of age, unless they are prescribed by a doctor for smoking cessation purposes and obtained with a prescription from a pharmacy.

In WA e-cigarette devices and their components, whether or not they contain nicotine, cannot be sold by tobacco or general retailers. It is also illegal to sell vapes to friends at school or in the community. If you suspect someone is selling vapes or e-cigarettes and their components, you can report it to the Department of Health by emailing [TobaccoPolicy@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:TobaccoPolicy@health.wa.gov.au).

## 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 schools Behaviour Policy and expectations.
- Confiscate the device and dispose the device through a waste removal service that is capable of disposing lithium batteries and liquid nicotine (a poison), not into general waste.

**Step 2:** Contact Parent/Carer

- Open a dialogue with the Parent/Carer in relation to the breach emphasising the illegal nature of possession of, supply of, 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'.

**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
- 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.

## **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.

## **DO I NEED TO CONTACT THE POLICE?**

E-cigarette use by students can be managed by the school through engagement with parents.

If you suspect someone is selling vapes or e-cigarettes and their components, you can report it to the Department of Health by emailing [TobaccoPolicy@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:TobaccoPolicy@health.wa.gov.au).

## **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](https://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.