



Shirebrook Academy

Principal: Lindsey Burgin BA (Hons) PGCE, MA
Chair of Governors: Mike McDermott
Executive Principal: Rebecca Hibberd BEd (Hons), MA
CEO: Rebecca Scutt BSc (Hons) PGCE

Vice Principals
Lindsay Ward BA (Hons) PGCE
Damian O'Reilly BA (Hons) NPQSL

Common Lane
Shirebrook
Nottinghamshire
NG20 8QF

TEL: 01623 747722

enquiries@shirebrookacademy.org
www.shirebrookacademy.org



Ref: Vapingcon23

27th November 2023

Concerns regarding the health and educational impact of children vaping

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am contacting you today to emphasise the concern we have around the current national issue relating to vaping amongst under 18s. An MP recently referred to this as 'a "health crisis", which is affecting schools up and down the country'.

This is not solely a Shirebrook Academy issue, but we believe it is impacting on a significant number of our students.

We are increasingly alarmed by the number of students who not only have access to vapes but regularly use them. In some cases, these vapes are even purchased for our children by adults.

As an academy we work closely with the police and trading standards in order to report and bring criminal proceedings to local businesses who have knowingly sold vapes and vaping products to under 18s.

If a student at Shirebrook Academy vapes on site, either in the toilets or going out of bounds to do this, this could have a considerable impact on their own safety and learning.

For example, vapes contain toxins that are addictive. This means that student concentration levels drop, they seek multiple reasons to leave lessons and their mood/attitude to learning is frequently negative. Vaping is therefore also negatively impacting on the learning and work environment of all other students and staff at the academy.

Below are some basic facts about vaping and the impact on under 18s -

1. Vaping exposes users to some toxins, and we do not yet know what the risks might be in the longer term.
2. Most vapes contain nicotine, which is an addictive substance that can be hard to stop using once you have started. Often our students are not aware of this fact.
3. Nicotine is more risky for young people than for adults, as evidence suggests the developing brain is more sensitive to its addictive effects.



All adults in school have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

4. In the UK, it is against the law to sell nicotine vaping products to under-18s or for adults to buy them on their behalf.
5. Some disposable vapes on sale are illegal and do not meet UK safety regulations. They can contain high levels of harmful substances, including illegal drugs.
6. Students who vape are much more likely to truant lessons and avoid lessons due to the urge to vape.
7. Students who vape are much more likely to experience 'mood changes' which can lead to an increase in verbal abusive and aggressive reactions, reductions in work rate and an associated decline in academic standards.

The facts are very clear that if a child vapes they become addicted very quickly. Not only will this seriously harm a developing body but it is obvious that it will severely disrupt their learning and progress. Evidence shows that students who vape regularly **miss lessons/truant**, have **poor punctuality**, are increasingly involved in **anti-social behaviour** and will frequently **break rules** and not follow basic expectations.

Not only is vaping incredibly harmful to a young person's physical and mental health but we have been made aware of some harmful chemicals contained in vapes that young people and parents may not be aware of. In particular we have received reports of THC and other higher-class drugs being contained in vapes which are being sold illegally or distributed to underage youths in our community.

THC is one such substance to be aware of – it is an oil that is present in certain vapes. It is a form of cannabis (the part of the cannabis plant that makes people feel 'high'). Vaping THC 'cannabis' can make the effects more unpredictable. It may be stronger than expected, or it may contain something much more harmful than THC like synthetic cannabinoids. The effects can be very dangerous, especially when people have a few puffs quickly before they know how strong it is, or what effect it's having on them. When inhaled THC can produce a toxic gas and cause lung injuries. Studies in Britain and the USA have stated that there have been over 3,000 hospital admissions and 68 deaths associated with THC vape. I have included some useful websites below that can give further details for parents and young people about this worrying trend. We are also being told about drugs which are even stronger that may be found in vapes which, when vaped, can cause even more worrying side effects.

We believe that there is a real danger that vaping amongst under 18s will have a significant impact on children's physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as their learning progress.

As per our academy policy, if we believe a student has a vape in school, we will question the student and search if necessary. This will lead to a sanction being issued, with students in possession of vapes or seen vaping issued a suspension. Where there is a concern that an adult has supplied the vape that the young person is using or they have been able to purchase from a vendor, details will be reported to the police.

We are very proud of all of our students and the overwhelming majority who endeavour to 'get things right' every day. This letter is intended to communicate the issue and our concerns around under 18 vaping. We would welcome your support with this matter in speaking to your child regarding it and highlighting how they can stay safe. We will also be working closely with other services to gain information about how we can raise the awareness of this with our students. We will be carrying out assemblies with all year groups to outline the dangers of vaping and to ensure students know that harmful substances can be added to vape liquid.

Below are some useful websites to support any discussion on vapes, but please do not hesitate to contact the academy or your child's year teams should any further information be required. As part of our curriculum, our students are educated about the dangers of drugs and alcohol during our Personal Development periods and science lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4.

Thank you for working with us to keep the young people of Shirebrook Academy safe.

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Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lindsey Burgin
Principal

<https://inews.co.uk/news/vaping-vape-uk-schools-children-e-cigarettes-harm-2171447>

<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking/young-people-and-vaping/#:~:text=Talking%20to%20young%20people%20about%20vaping&text=Young%20people%20can%20find%20out,about%20vaping%20and%20the%20law.>

<https://www.talktofrank.com/news/cannabisvapes>



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