



WALK IN NEW LIFE

MATER MARIA CATHOLIC COLLEGE
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Zero Tolerance to 'VAPING' e-Cigarettes at School

What is 'vaping'?

A relatively new phenomenon amongst our young people seems to be the use of e-cigarettes or "vaping". The use of e-cigarettes is on the rise, particularly among high school students, and consequently, it is important that as parents, you are equipped with some relevant background information to enable those significant conversations about risky behaviours to take place.

This image shows the 'cuvie' brand of e-cigarette which has become very popular amongst teenagers. These products are also known as 'stigs'. As you can see they look like a highlighter pen or USB stick and come in fruity flavours just like lollies or lip gloss.

They could easily be mistaken or overlooked if your child had one of these in their school bag, pencil case or pocket. The danger is that these small devices contain various liquids, including nicotine, that is heated using a battery and turned into vapour to inhale. Most of these products have a floral sweet smell very similar to popular deodorants and body sprays teenagers often use. It is quite clear that these products are being marketed to children and manufacturers are keen to get them 'hooked' with the addictive properties of nicotine.



Apart from being considered a 'gateway' activity to smoking and other drug-taking, vaping is not safe. As well as nicotine, users are inhaling various other chemicals, some of which we know to have negative health impacts and others that we know very little about.

These devices can be purchased for \$15 at specialist vape stores, tobacconists and there are also people supplying these to kids at skate parks, shopping centres, parks and beaches. Students who have been caught with these banned substances have reported that there are speciality tobacconist shops in Dee Why, Neutral Bay and the CBD who are prepared to sell these products to underage children. Most purchases are through older 'friends' at skateparks and local parks. Any shop or person supplying e-cigarettes to our students will be referred to the police.

More Information - Why are we taking this so seriously?

- https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/E-cigarettes_and_teens/
- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-28/selling-vaping-to-teenagers-at-epidemic-levels/11452036>
- <https://m.facebook.com/ACurrentAffair9/videos/2342542279386452/>

'Vaping' is NOT ...

- It is NOT safe.
- It is NOT legal if you are under 18 years of age.
- It is NOT permitted at school or any school-related activity - it is a banned substance and will be dealt with in a similar manner to cigarettes or alcohol.

What Have We Done So Far?

- All year groups have been spoken to about the dangers of using e-cigarettes.
- All year groups have been informed that there are serious consequences for students who are in possession of e-cigarettes or using e-cigarettes either at school or travelling to and from school.
- Staff have been vigilant and are reporting any behaviours that might indicate a student is involved in this type of activity.
- In 2020, approximately 15 students were suspended for this type of behaviour.

Educating Our Students - Prevention is Best

Like all risk-taking behaviours, we need to highlight the dangers to our young people and provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions. We will continue to provide students with health information through our PDHPE and Pastoral Care programs on 'vaping' and other harmful activities.

We ask for your help and support with this. Please have a conversation with your child(ren) as soon as possible about the effects these products have on their bodies and outline the serious consequences they will face at school should they make poor choices.

If you are concerned that your child may have an issue with using e-cigarettes, alcohol or other drugs, we are here to assist you and can help connect you and your child to relevant community support. Please contact your child's Year Coordinator or a member of the School Leadership team.

If, in your discussions with your children, you have information about who is supplying e-cigarettes to our students, please make contact with me at marc.reicher@dbb.catholic.edu.au. I am keen to pass this information on to police and your anonymity will be respected.

Consequences For Banned Substances at Mater Maria - Zero Tolerance

We have a zero-tolerance for students bringing banned substances to school and/or supplying them to other students. E-cigarettes are considered a banned substance and students involved in this type of activity will face the following consequences:

- Supplying e-cigarettes to other students (anywhere and anytime) = 5 day suspension at home, the student referred to police and a parent interview to discuss continued enrolment and any support required.
- In possession or using e-cigarettes at school = 3 day suspension at home, reflective activity on the health effects and a parent interview to discuss support required.

We thank you for your support in keeping our young people safe and well.