

## The Truth About Vaping: Information for Parents/Guardians

Traci Wojciechowski from Caron Student Assistance Programs presented The Truth about Vaping to parents and guardians on Monday evening June 4<sup>th</sup> at the MHS auditorium. This issue is becoming a health epidemic among our youth across the country, throughout the state and here in Milton. We have seen a spike in the use of these products at MHS and it has become an issue in other local districts.

In our efforts to keep your children safe and to keep you informed, we want to bring to your attention the use of E-Cigarettes, Vape Pens or Juul Pods. As mentioned above, we have seen a rise in the popularity of these devices at MHS. We'd like to share some information (that was sent to MHS parent/guardians in November 2017) and enlist your help to make sure students are not bringing them into school or using them at any school sponsored events.

Vapes are being heavily marketed to two groups. The first is to those looking to quit smoking cigarettes. The sales pitch is that vaporizing is healthier than smoking. There is minimal scientific evidence for this (largely because of timing, long-term studies have not been able to be conducted) and *what* is getting inhaled plays a significant role in how accurate that could be. But the 'healthy' benefits are a big part of the pitch.

The other group to whom the companies are marketing is adolescents and, while they are playing up the inaccurate 'healthy' aspects, the real pitch here comes down to being 'cool'. This effort to get young users early is made all the easier by vapes' convenience and ability to be used quickly and without detection, with very little residual odor. It is usually a little sweet odor (fruity or mint) and not like cigarettes or marijuana. As you can see from some of the images below, vapes come in a wide range of designs, all of which easily fit into a pocket or bag. Some versions are designed to avoid notice by looking like other common items, such as inhalers, computer pen drives, and even small gaming systems. A quick Google image search will provide additional pictures if you would like to investigate further.

The liquid being vaporized and inhaled is usually referred to as the 'juice' and comes in small containers in a very wide array of flavors. Some are simply flavored liquid. Many, though, have nicotine and other chemicals and addictive elements to them which are harmful. The juice is also easily - and often - infused with THC, the key chemical in marijuana.

The result of this ease of access is that students across the country are being encouraged to take part in behavior that is unhealthy, illegal, and, specifically, against the rules at all of our schools. This reality, mixed with a culture that is becoming increasingly tolerant of marijuana use in general, means our students have greater access to ways of getting 'high' that are difficult to detect, while having fewer concerns about the detrimental impact of marijuana use on their still-developing brains. It is not a good combination as we've learned from recent scientific research. Here is a link to a great resource site: <http://med.stanford.edu/tobaccopreventiontoolkit/E-Cigs.html>

We strongly encourage you to talk with your children about the dangers of vaping and the problems that can occur from it. Honest and straightforward discussions about issues such as these can have a very significant impact on their choices. In the conversation, it may also be helpful to remind students that being in possession of tobacco or nicotine, tobacco/nicotine products, and paraphernalia are against our rules and result in consequences leading to in or out of school suspensions. Being in possession of drugs, items infused with drugs, or drug paraphernalia is against our rules and will typically result in a multiple day suspension.

This is an ongoing process of education and prevention. Principal Jette addressed this topic with all MHS students in the building during assemblies on the first two days of school and again with all Freshmen and Sophomores on Friday, October 13, 2017. We had Dr. Ruth Potee come to present to parents/guardians in February regarding the teen brain and addiction. MHS students will have a “Dangers of Vaping” presentation from Caron Student Programs on Wednesday June 13. MHS and Pierce students have health education classes that explore content knowledge, prevention techniques and skills regarding substance use prevention. We continue to remind our students of the concerns over these choices and the potential consequences, and we would appreciate your reiteration of those points as well. We also appreciate your attentiveness to items your child may have on his/her possession that look like vapes or the related aspects.

We do want to stress that our schools are safe places where the majority of our students make healthy choices each and every day. Together we can help steer students away from the draw, easy access, use, and misuse of vapes. We appreciate your partnership in continuing to keep our students making healthy, safe and smart choices. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Director for Health and Physical Education, Mr. Noel Vigue [nvigue@miltonps.org](mailto:nvigue@miltonps.org). As always, thank you very much for your ongoing support!

MHS Principal James Jette and Noel Vigue, Director, Health and PE



