

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I am once again sending out this notice regarding our concerns about the increasing number of students using Vape Pens or Juul Pods. In our efforts to keep your children safe and to keep you informed, I want to bring to your attention the use of E-Cigarettes, Vape Pens or Juul Pods. As many of you may know already, the popularity of these devices are creating many challenges for schools throughout the commonwealth and the country. Therefore, I thought it might be helpful to share some information with you again to enlist your help to make sure students are not bringing them into Milton High School or using them at any school sponsored events. Again, we have seen a spike in their use and I have been informed by other district school leaders that they too are seeing the same trend.

Vapes are being heavily marketed to two groups. The first is to those looking to quit smoking cigarettes. The sales pitch is that vaping is healthier than smoking. There is minimal scientific evidence for this (largely because they are still new enough that long-term studies have not been done) 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 '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 and not like cigarettes or marijuana. These gadgets 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 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 addictive elements to them. 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 Milton High School. 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.

I 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, please remind students that being in possession of tobacco or nicotine, tobacco/nicotine products, and paraphernalia are against our rules and the use of such products will result in consequences leading to in or out of school suspensions. Also, if caught, students will lose a percentage of their extracurricular activities such as 25% or 50% of their athletic season. 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.

For your information, we have addressed this topic with all students in the building during assemblies on the first two days of school and again prior to the Drug Story Theatre presentation on Friday, December 5, 2018. On June 4, 2018, we held an evening community event "The Truth About Vaping" as part of the Milton PARENT Speaker Series and we had a similar presentation during the day for all students. Finally, our Physical Education/Health Teachers have already presented information regarding Vape Pens and Juul use in their health classes as we continue to remind our students of the concerns over these choices and the potential consequences. With that said, we would appreciate your reiteration of our concerns and your attentiveness to items your child may have on his/her possession that look like vapes or the related aspects.

I do want to stress that Milton High School is a safe place where the majority of our students make great choices each and every day. My interest in reaching out to all of you is to help steer some away from the draw, easy access, use, and misuse of vapes/Juul pods. I appreciate your partnership in keeping our students healthy, safe and encouraging them to make smart choices.

As always, thank you very much for your ongoing support!

James F. Jette
Principal
Milton High School