



# Guru Nanak Sikh Multi Academy Trust

Aspire ~ Acquire ~ Achieve

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Chief Executive Officer: Mr Jaskamal S. Sidhu

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

## RE: Vaping and E-Cigarette and Edibles Parent Guide

Pupil safety and wellbeing is our highest priority. We have been contacted by the Local Authority to highlight a concern nationally about the use of 'edibles' by a small number of young people; which has resulted in some requiring medical assistance. There is also a concern regarding the use of Vapes/E-Cigarettes amongst young people which are far more prevalent nationally. Some parents and young people may be confused about the difference regarding the effects and the laws and therefore it is our duty to clarify these to raise awareness across the school community.

**The purchase of edibles or any other item that may contain an illegal drug such as cannabis are illegal in the UK.** If a pupil is found in possession of items such as edibles or other items containing illegal substances they are likely to be permanently excluded in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. The incident will also be reported to the police as well as the Local Authority.

**Vapes and E-Cigarettes are not illegal, however, they are not for children and are prohibited from schools.** The legal age to buy Vapes/E-Cigarettes in the UK is 18 years old. If a pupil is found with a typical Vape/E-Cigarette at school, they are likely to receive a suspension in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

### What are edibles?

Edibles are food products that may contain cannabis. There are many forms of edibles, including sweets, gummies and lollipops. They usually contain – or are marketed as containing - a number of chemicals, many of which are harmful and controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) including tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC is the psychoactive compound in cannabis and can make people feel a range of effects, while cannabidiol (CBD) is the non-psychoactive chemical compound which does not have the same effect. Any CBD product containing THC is illegal in the UK. The sweet versions are widely available on the internet and via social media and may be easily accessed by young people. The packaging is often deliberately targeted to attract young people. There is NO quality control of these products.

### What are we worried about?

The amount of cannabis in these products can vary greatly and sometimes other harmful drugs are added too. The effects of consuming edibles are unpredictable and it can be very easy to accidentally take a larger dose. Edibles take between 1-3 hours to have an effect because food is absorbed into the bloodstream through the liver. Because it takes longer, the person taking them may end up consuming larger amounts of the drug while thinking the drug is not working. As edibles may look like other products, there is also the risk someone may ingest them without realising they contain drugs - this could include other children in the home.

Displayed side effects may include:

- Paranoia panic attacks
- Nausea
- Impaired mobility
- Hyperactivity
- Elevated heart rate
- Hallucinations

### What can you do?

We recommend monitoring food packaging/ wrappers, looking for wording such as CBD or THC suggesting the items are cannabis oil infused. Please be mindful of the medical needs should a child present with symptoms or if you suspect they have consumed a drug-laced substance. In a medical emergency call 999.

If you are made aware of any social media accounts advertising these items, we ask you report this information to the police, school or Crime Stoppers.

The following websites are really helpful sources of information for children, young people, and their parents and carers:

Talk to FRANK – the government’s drug advice website/helpline and their specific page on cannabis:

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/cannabis>

For friendly, confidential advice, Talk to FRANK on 0300 1236600.

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/drugs-and-alcohol/>  
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/alcohol-drugs-parenting/>

### Edibles Packaging Examples



## Vapes and E-Cigarettes

Although Vapes and E-Cigarettes are not illegal, they are not for children and are prohibited in school. The legal age to buy Vapes/E-Cigarettes in the UK is 18 years old. If a pupil is found with a typical Vape/E-Cigarette at school, they are likely to receive a suspension in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

If a pupil witnesses or suspects another pupil has a Vape/E-Cigarette or any other prohibited item, they are expected to report this to the Safeguarding Team or any other member of staff without delay.

### **What Are E-Cigarettes/Vapes?**

- E-Cigarettes are known by many different names. They are sometimes called “e-cigs,” “e-hookahs,” “mods,” “vape pens,” “vapes,” “tank systems” and “electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).”
- Using an E-Cigarette is sometimes called “vaping.”
- Vaping is different to smoking, which burns tobacco leaf creating smoke. Both vaping and smoking deliver nicotine, but it is the burning of tobacco that causes most of the harm. Vaping, however, is not completely harmless.
- E-Cigarettes/Vapes are electronic devices that heat a liquid and produce an aerosol or mix of small particles in the air.
- E-Cigarettes/Vapes come in many shapes and sizes. Most have a battery, a heating element and a place to hold a liquid. They are often brightly coloured and popular brands include Elf Bar, Smok, Aspire, Vopoo, Vapresso and ICON.
- Some E-Cigarettes look like regular cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Some look like USB flash drives, pens and other everyday items. Larger devices such as tank systems or “mods,” do not look like other tobacco products.
- Please also be aware of ‘Healthy Vapes’ that contain ingredients such as chamomile, grapes and lavender. At first glance they may seem harmless but once again these are not tested and not allowed in schools. They are often marketed to help with anxiety and sleep.



Some e-cigarettes look like regular cigarettes, cigars, or pipes.  
Some look like USB flash drives, pens, and other everyday items.

## How Do E-Cigarettes/Vapes Work?

- E-Cigarettes/Vapes produce an aerosol by heating a liquid that usually contains nicotine, flavourings and other chemicals that help to make the aerosol.
- The liquid used in E-Cigarettes often contains nicotine and flavourings. This liquid is sometimes called “e-juice,” “e-liquid,” “vape juice,” or “vape liquid” and can be added to a device or is already within some devices and not visible.
- Users inhale E-Cigarette/Vape aerosol into their lungs. Bystanders can also breathe in this aerosol when the user exhales it into the air.
- Some E-Cigarette devices can be used to deliver marijuana and other drugs.

## Why is Nicotine Unsafe for Kids, Teens and Young Adults?

- Most E-Cigarettes (Vapes) contain some nicotine - the addictive drug in regular cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products.
- A study found that 99% of the E-Cigarettes sold in assessed venues in the United States contained nicotine.
- Some vape product labels do not disclose that they contain nicotine and some vape liquids marketed as containing 0% nicotine have been found to contain nicotine.
- Nicotine can harm the developing adolescent brain. The brain keeps developing until about age 25.
- Using nicotine in adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood and impulse control.
- Each time a new memory is created or a new skill is learned, stronger connections – or synapses – are built between brain cells. Young people’s brains build synapses faster than adult brains. Nicotine changes the way these synapses are formed.
- Using nicotine in adolescence may also increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.

## Examples of common Vapes/E-Cigarettes available:



The school helps support the issues of drugs/alcohol in a number of ways:

- Education of pupils through PSHE lessons, assemblies and signposting of support through the school website.
- Year group assemblies delivered by NHS will be taking place for all year groups in February and March (Secondary Phase).
- Emotional support through Mental Health 'First aiders', 'Mental Health Ambassadors' and counselling services.
- Anonymous reporting through TootToot online platform for pupils who have worries or concerns (Secondary Phase).
- Annual drugs dogs visit to ensure the school site is free from any illegal substances. This is taking place again in the summer term.
- Open pigeon holes instead of lockers to reduce the risk of pupils storing prohibited items on school grounds (Secondary Phase).
- Staff safeguarding training to spot the signs of use/misuse of drugs/alcohol in pupils.

### **Additional Support for Parents:**

#### **Webinar: 'Digital World for Teenagers':**

Brilliant Parents Present a 'Lunch and Learn' Webinar on The Digital World for Teenagers with Dr. Michele McDowell (Free). **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023 12:30pm-1:30pm.**

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/digital-world-for-teenagers-tickets-517537497587?ct=t%28EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_10\\_29\\_2021\\_15\\_4\\_COPY\\_01%29&mc\\_eid=6778d023e5&mc\\_cid=ddd7b24d0b](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/digital-world-for-teenagers-tickets-517537497587?ct=t%28EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_10_29_2021_15_4_COPY_01%29&mc_eid=6778d023e5&mc_cid=ddd7b24d0b)

#### **Face to Face Workshop: 'Understanding the Complexities of Youth Culture'**

Supporting parents to develop their understanding of youth community and custodial settings, in order to safeguard at an earlier stage. **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023, 2:00pm – 3:00pm**  
Hayes Muslim Centre 3 Pump Lane Hayes Town, UB3 3NB.

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/understanding-the-complexities-of-youth-culture-tickets-520380852137?ct=t%28EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_10\\_29\\_2021\\_15\\_4\\_COPY\\_01%29&mc\\_eid=6778d023e5&mc\\_cid=ddd7b24d0b](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/understanding-the-complexities-of-youth-culture-tickets-520380852137?ct=t%28EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_10_29_2021_15_4_COPY_01%29&mc_eid=6778d023e5&mc_cid=ddd7b24d0b)

If you have any worries or questions regarding any of the above issues, please do not hesitate to contact the GNSA Safeguarding Team or visit our website pages:

<https://www.gnsmat.co.uk/safeguarding>

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

GNSMAT Safeguarding Team