

Dear parent/carer,

In recent weeks, Governor Stirling Senior High School has identified students using vapes on school premises. There has been a growing concern about the harmful effects vaping has on young people.

The take-up of vaping by young people is increasing. Research has found that in WA around 13.5% of secondary students have tried an e-cigarette.

There are many different styles of vapes and they can be difficult to spot. The biggest misunderstanding about vapes is that they are harmless compared to cigarettes. This is not true. Vapes are not safe.

### **Vaping facts**

- Many vapes contain nicotine making them very addictive.
- Vapes contain many toxic chemicals, they just don't put it on the pack.
- Vapes can contain the same harmful chemicals found in cleaning products, nail polish remover, weed killer and bug spray.
- Vapes can leave young people at increased risk of depression and anxiety.
- The nicotine in 1 vape can equal 50 cigarettes. Depending on the size of vape and nicotine strength, it can be much higher.
- Young people who vape are 3 times as likely to take up smoking cigarettes.
- Vape aerosol is not water vapour.
- Vaping has been linked to serious lung disease.
- Vapes that contain nicotine can cause long-lasting negative effects on young people's brain development.

### **What is Governor Stirling Senior High School doing?**

Governor Stirling Senior High School follows the procedures within our School Behaviour Management Policy. This will guide our disciplinary approach if there is a breach of behavioural standards. Further, we will be proactive with students who transgress by helping them to understand the dangers of vaping, as well as being more vigilant in monitoring vaping at school.

Additionally, our teachers have a range of curriculum-based activities through the WA Schools Anti-Vaping Toolkit to ensure students know the facts about vaping. These will be included as part of the Health Education curriculum for students in Years 8, 9 and 10.

### **Is your child vaping?**

Signs that your child might have started vaping are the usual symptoms of nicotine addiction such as feeling irritable or anxious. If they are vaping, encourage them to stop and let them know that you are there for support. Stopping can sometimes be hard and they may need advice from a GP or other healthcare professional.

### **What can you do as a parent?**

Take the time to talk to your child about vaping and help them understand all of the risks associated with vaping. They may see it as a normal thing to do, which is not the case. Try to start the conversation with your child in a relaxed easy-going way, perhaps taking the cue from this letter, and, importantly, have your facts ready. The attached fact sheets provide information to help you with this.

It is illegal in WA to sell e-cigarette devices and nicotine vaping products to anyone regardless of age, unless they are prescribed by a doctor for smoking cessation purposes and obtained with a prescription from a pharmacy. E-cigarette devices and their

components, whether they contain nicotine or not, cannot be sold by tobacco or general retailers in WA. It is also illegal to sell vapes to friends at school or in the community. You can report suspected illegal sales of vapes to the Department of Health by emailing: [TobaccoPolicy@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:TobaccoPolicy@health.wa.gov.au)

**For more information**

Get the evidence and facts at [www.education.wa.edu.au](http://www.education.wa.edu.au)