

WILMOT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT



March 23, 2018

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Wilmot Union High School, similar to many other schools, has seen a recent spike in incidents involving student vaping. Complicating this issue is that there is varying information and misunderstandings involving vaping and/or electronic cigarettes. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the issue, give you resources if you feel your child is involved in this kind of behavior, as well as alert you to possible repercussions if your child engages in vaping on school property. We take this issue very seriously due to the negative health effects vaping can have on our students and find that our parents are often not aware of the risks around vaping. The increase in vaping prompted us to do more research and we want to share our findings with you.

Vaping is the act of inhaling a vapor produced by an electronic vaporizer or e-cigarette. The vapor can contain nicotine and other substances including liquid marijuana and other more powerful drugs. The liquids that are vaporized come in many different flavors and might even smell fruity. For example, many of the flavors of these liquid concentrates, or 'vape juices', are sweet and have names such as cinnamon roll, marshmallow, bubblegum, lemonade and cookies. Additionally, since the FDA does not regulate the contents of vape juice, it is possible for students to be ingesting chemicals they are completely unaware of.

Vaping is prohibited by the WUHS Student Handbook, which all students and parents/guardians sign off on to acknowledge their understanding of the rules and behavioral expectations at our school. While we try to proactively educate to prevent any incidents, there will be consequences if a student vapes on school property. The consequences for vaping will include a minimum one day out of school suspension, confiscation of the vaping device, and possible police involvement. Furthermore, if a student is an athlete in possession of a vaporizer or is seen in the act of vaping, this is a violation of the WUHS athletic code and can result in loss of eligibility for a portion of or all of the season.

Vaporizers/e-cigarettes come in all different shapes. Some common styles we see look like a thick pen, a stylus for an iPad, a guitar pick, a flash drive, or a small flask with a round chimney coming off the top. We have included some photos of vapes for you to see as many adults have not seen these devices. The first two photos are more modern vapes, while the second two are more traditional. The fifth photo shows two examples of vape juice. The devices are very small and can easily be hidden on a person or blend in with normal backpack items. Like cigarettes, stores cannot sell vaping items to people under the age of 18. However, students report that they purchase the devices online or buy from older siblings, friends, or unfortunately even parents.

The Surgeon General reports that nicotine is addictive and can harm brain development, which continues until about age 25. We know that using nicotine may make it harder for school related tasks such as learning and concentration. In conversations with students, it appears that many are not aware of the harmful effects of vaping. Students either say they use nicotine-free liquid or that it is safer than tobacco cigarettes.

Here are two helpful resources that you can use to talk to your kids about vaping. The first is the Surgeon General's 2016 report on e-cigarette use. The second is a fact sheet and parent tip sheet. If you feel your child has already developed an addiction to nicotine, we suggest you reach out to your health care provider.

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/e-cigarettes/index.htm

https://www.bedfordma.gov/sites/bedfordma/files/file/file/nida-ecig_infographic2016.pdf

It is our hope that through the efforts of home and school, our students will refrain from using such devices. We strongly encourage you to have a conversation with your child about the dangers of e-cigarettes and vaping.

With Regards,



Amber Torres, Principal

