



## Alamo Heights Independent School District

7101 Broadway ♦ San Antonio, Texas 78209 ♦ Phone 210-824-2483

Dear AHISD Parents,

Vaping, or the use of E-cigarettes, has become increasingly popular and pervasive among adolescents across the state and nation. Quite often adolescents order these online, without adults being aware. Vape pens and E-cigarettes, like regular tobacco cigarettes, are NOT permitted at school or school events.

It is sometimes hard to detect, but we have seen increased instances of it over the past two years. To combat this growing problem, it is important that the district and parents work together from a common base of facts. We, as a school, want to help you to understand what vaping is and to know the warning signs.

### **What is a Vaporizer or Vape?**

In short, a vaporizer pen or vape pen (a type of e-cigarette) is a device ranging in size from a flash drive to a standard pen up to a cell phone size and larger. The vape is used to inhale heated propylene glycol or vegetable glycerin (vape juice) and blow out the vapor.

### **What is Vape Juice?**

Some contain nicotine

Others contain THC or CBD, both ingredients in Marijuana, and both are illegal

Some contain nothing but flavoring

MANY ARE ODORLESS!

### **What does a vape look like?**

- mouthpiece
- battery
- cartridge for containing the e-liquid or e-juice
- heating component for the device that is powered by a battery
- E-cigarettes do not always contain nicotine. They are also not burned. They use solutions that are heated to a vapor, hence the name "vape."
- There are many styles and sizes available.

### **Statistics on the rise of vaping among adolescents**

A 2015 national survey reported that about 3 million students use them. That number is up from 2.46 million in 2014 and an increase of 900% over the last 5 years.

According to the FDA, more than 2 million middle and high school students were current users of e-cigarettes in 2016. That is 11% of high school and 4.3% of middle school students.

In 2013-2014, 81% of current youth e-cigarette users cited the availability of appealing flavors as the primary reason for use, as reported by the FDA.

Since 2014, E-cigarettes have remained the most commonly used form of tobacco by youth in the U.S.

These numbers are only increasing.

## Warning Signs

- 1) Physiological Signs: Can include dry mouth, nosebleeds, strange or erratic behavior
- 2) Unfamiliar handheld gadgets: Vaporizers come in various shapes and sizes. The most common resemble a pen. If you find a gadget that looks like a pen or flash drive, but it does not function as that, it could be a Vaporizer.  
\*Look for holes on each end of the device
- 3) Mystic Aroma: Vaporizers do not smell bad, like cigarette smoke. Most vape juice smells nice, like candy, mint, vanilla, fruit punch, etc. If you are catching sudden whiffs of one of these odors, consider it a red flag.
- 4) Increased Thirstiness: When the vapor enters the mouth, the Propylene Glycol creates a state of dry mouth for the vapor to do "its thing." So, if you notice your child suddenly drinking a lot more water, keep a closer eye on him/her.
- 5) Caffeine Sensitivity: An individual that is consistently vaping will develop caffeine sensitivity. So, if your child, who used to enjoy their daily Starbucks, suddenly stops wanting them all the time, vaping could be the cause.
- 6) Batteries and Chargers: Vaporizers being used regularly need to be charged daily. Some charge with a USB cable, but some require batteries. Be on the lookout for extra USB cables and used batteries.
- 7) Metallic Wires and Cotton Wicks: If you find organic cotton, empty plastic vials or thin metallic coils in your child's possession, this is another red flag.
- 8) Discarded Atomizers: The atomizers are a vital part of Vaporizers, as they turn the vape juice into the vapor that is inhaled. They are disposable and will burn out eventually, so be on the lookout.

If you find your child in possession of a vaporizer or E-cigarette, please have an open dialogue with him/her about the dangers of them. As always, if our school counselor can be helpful in assisting your child to work through these issues, please contact them.

For information about FDA tobacco product regulation, please visit

<https://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/Labeling/ProductsIngredientsComponents/ucm456610.htm>.

For more information about talking to your student about these issues, visit this article from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/features/ecigarettes-young-people/index.html>.

Please note the pictures below to see a small sample of the various sizes and shapes of vapes available.

Sincerely,

Catherine Widder, LCSW  
AHISD Wellness Coordinator



# Alamo Heights Independent School District

7101 Broadway ♦ San Antonio, Texas 78209 ♦ Phone 210-824-2483

