



Kildare Catholic College

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Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

The use of e-cigarettes is on the rise, particularly among high school students, and, given that the use of these devices is a relatively new phenomenon, we felt it important to provide students, parents, carers and staff with some relevant background information.

Electronic cigarettes are battery-operated devices that heat a liquid to produce a vapour which is inhaled. The fluid usually contains propylene glycol, glycerol, nicotine and added flavouring(s). The devices are designed to deliver the aerosol directly to the lungs. Some resemble conventional cigarettes, while more recently developed devices look like everyday items such as pens or USB memory sticks. The appeal of these flavoured e-cigarettes to adolescents has led to their rapid uptake around the world.

The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is concerned that e-cigarettes have 'renormalised' smoking. A worryingly recent study has also found that e-cigarette users were three times more likely than non-e-cigarette users to subsequently become tobacco smokers.

While the damaging impact of smoking tobacco is well known, the short and long-term health effects of e-cigarettes are still being researched.

SAFETY OF E-CIGARETTES

Although the compositions of the e-cigarette liquids vary, they all contain a range of different solvents and flavouring agents which have the potential to increase the risk of developing cardiovascular, cancer and respiratory diseases.

When overheated, the solvents propylene glycol and glycerine can produce dangerous levels of the carcinogens formaldehyde and acetaldehyde.

The vapour can also contain:

- Heavy metals such as aluminium, arsenic, chromium, copper, lead, nickel and tin, all of which cause adverse health effects.
- Particulates at levels that have the potential to cause adverse health effects for both the user and for bystanders. The World Health Organisation has warned that exposure to any level of particulate matter may be harmful and that levels of exposure should be minimised.



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- Flavourings normally approved for use in food production e.g. cherry, cinnamon, vanilla and popcorn flavours which, when inhaled directly into the lungs, can be toxic and have been demonstrated to have a range of different deleterious effects.

The NHMRC has found that users of e-cigarettes typically experience a low rate of adverse effects in the short-term, with mouth and throat irritation the most commonly reported symptoms. The most common symptoms reported by those passively exposed to e-cigarettes included respiratory difficulties, eye irritation, headache, nausea and sore throat or throat irritation.

More serious adverse events have also been reported, with many incidents in NSW alone of e-cigarettes overheating, catching fire or exploding, leading to disfigurement and life-threatening injury. The rising popularity of e-cigarette use internationally has also corresponded with an increasing number of reported nicotine poisonings due to skin exposure to or ingestion of e-liquids.

The newest and most popular vaping product is the JUUL, which resembles a USB memory stick. Many lawmakers and public health officials have criticised the company's marketing practices, believing them to have targeted teens through social media influencers and their promotion of fruity pod flavours, which are now only sold online.

Vaping is often marketed as being the "healthy" alternative to smoking. However, doctors strongly advise that if you do not smoke, then you should not start vaping. Most teenagers are unaware of the associated risks and potential impact vaping can have on their development and overall health. Parents are encouraged to discuss the dangers of nicotine addiction and include e-cigarettes in the discussion alongside alcohol and drugs.

This Special Report highlights the facts around vaping and e-cigarettes and what are the potential risks. We hope you take time to reflect on the information offered in this Special Report, and as always, we welcome your feedback.

If you do have any concerns about the wellbeing of your child, please contact the school for further information or seek medical or professional help.

Here is the link to your special report

https://kildarecatholiccollege.schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-vaping-au



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VAPING AND THE LAW IN NEW SOUTH WALES

- The *Smoke-free Environment Act 2000* and the *Passenger Transport (General) Regulation 2017* prohibit people from using electronic cigarettes (or e-cigarettes) in smoke-free areas. They can use e-cigarettes where smoking is not banned.
- Under the *NSW Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008*, it is illegal to sell e-cigarettes or e-cigarette accessories to a person under 18 years of age.
- It is illegal to display, advertise or promote e-cigarettes.
- E-cigarettes that do not contain nicotine are legal in NSW. Adults can buy and use e-cigarettes that do not contain nicotine.
- The sale and use of e-liquid nicotine, including in e-cigarettes, is against the law.
- E-cigarettes are not harm-free and may expose users and bystanders to chemicals that are harmful to health. The Therapeutic Goods Administration has not approved e-cigarettes as an aid to help smokers to quit.
- NSW Health continues to carefully monitor the evidence to ensure the regulation of e-cigarettes is balanced and proportionate to the risks and benefits that they present.
- The Australian Chief Medical Officer and all state and territory Chief Health Officers have issued a statement outlining the emerging link between e-cigarette use and severe lung disease.

Kind Regards,

Chris Browne
College Principal

Matt Conn
Leader of Academic Care & Wellbeing