

HOLYHEAD SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

November 2024

OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM



At Holyhead School we endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We believe that all children should feel safe and be able to approach someone if they have a concern. The safety and wellbeing of our students is the most important aspect of our work as a school. If you have any concerns about your child's wellbeing or safety, or want to report a concern about another child, please ask to speak to one of the Designated Safeguarding Team.

In this month's issue we look at:

- Our Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Getting clear on cannabis
- What is Fentanyl and what are the facts
- What is snus?
- What is vaping?
- Children with family members in prison

As we approach the start of a new half-term this month we are focusing on supporting you in developing your understanding of drugs and the impact they can have on young people.

Getting clear on Cannabis

Getting clear on cannabis

There has been a worrying trend rising in the UK amongst young people. Instead of smoking cannabis, cannabis is being infused into sweets and other food items. The items are branded to look like genuine sweet brands such as Skittles/Haribo and Starburst etc. The sweets can contain dangerous levels of concentrated THC, the psychoactive ingredient of cannabis. The packets are clearly designed to appeal to young people. The only difference in the packaging is the slight difference in the name and there will be a cannabis icon on the bag (This can be seen on the packets below)



Cannabis can be infused into several food items including cakes, sweets, chocolates, drinks, syrups, butters or spreads and oils. Unlike smoking cannabis, swallowing cannabis is much easier to consume, however it takes longer to take effect. As a result, those taking them are likely to eat too many due to the delayed effect.

What are cannabis 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.”- Edibles: Information for parents, carers and professionals | Catch22 (catch-22.org.uk)

Side effects of THC can include; psychotic episodes, disorientation and confusion, changes in perception, depression, paranoia, heart problems, panic attacks, nausea or vomiting, hallucinations, memory loss, feeling lethargic, loss of consciousness, breathing difficulties, insomnia and anxiety.

The purchase of cannabis edibles is **illegal in the UK**, but we know the products are advertised for sale through social media networks – and therefore young people are at risk of seeing them. **ALL OF THE BELOW SWEETS ARE ILLEGAL IN THE UK.**

person uses it in a monitored medical setting, the drug carries a high potential for misuse, also known as abuse.

Medical uses for fentanyl

Medically prescribed fentanyl is available in several forms, including:

- Lozenges (commonly known as lollipops)
- Oral or nasal sprays
- Injections

Medical uses for fentanyl include:

- Anaesthesia for people undergoing heart surgery or with a heart condition
- Management of breakthrough cancer pain in people who are already receiving opioid medication for underlying, persistent pain
- Long-term pain management in people who have persistent, moderate to severe chronic pain
- Pain relief for people already taking analgesics or who are opioid-tolerant

When someone **misuses fentanyl**, it is usually illegally manufactured fentanyl rather than a prescription product. For example, the person may obtain it as powders or pills or add it to containers such as eye droppers or nasal sprays. Street names for fentanyl include Apache, China Girl, Goodfellas, Great Bear, and Tango & Cash.

How does fentanyl affect the brain?

As with other opioid drugs, fentanyl binds to the receptors in the brain that affect pain and emotion. This causes feelings of well-being (euphoria) and relaxation and relieves pain.

Over time, however, the brain adapts to fentanyl, making it difficult for someone to experience positive emotions without the drug. This can lead to addiction.

Abuse and fentanyl

A person with a substance use disorder might obtain fentanyl by misusing prescribed medication or acquiring the drug from an illegal laboratory. Misuse of fentanyl includes taking it orally, smoking it, snorting it, or injecting it. One method of use is not safer than another.

Discarded fentanyl patches may still contain significant amounts of the drug. This can result in misuse if someone removes the gel contents from discarded patches.

Illegal drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, are sometimes mixed with fentanyl, which makes the drugs more potent. If someone with a substance use disorder is unaware of the added fentanyl, this can put them at a higher risk of accidental overdose or death.

Powdered fentanyl can be made to look like other drugs. It is often pressed into pills that look exactly like prescription pills, such as Percocet or Xanax.

In the liquid form, illegally made fentanyl can be found as a replacement for heroin. There are also reports of fentanyl being packaged as nasal sprays and eye drops. Additionally, liquid fentanyl can be dropped onto paper or small candies.

What is "rainbow fentanyl"?

"Rainbow fentanyl" is a newer phenomenon. This type of fentanyl is mixed with dyes and either pressed into brightly coloured pills or sold as powder in various colours. Drug traffickers are likely using these dyes to avoid detection and appeal to teens and young adults.

There is no indication that certain colours may be more potent than others, as indicated through laboratory testing.

Risks of fentanyl use

As with any opiate, there is a risk of dependency, tolerance, misuse, and addiction with fentanyl. Physical dependence results in withdrawal symptoms when individuals suddenly stop taking the drug.

For someone who is addicted to fentanyl, withdrawal symptoms can start as early as a few hours after they stop taking it. Withdrawal symptoms may include:

- Vomiting and diarrhoea
- Muscle and bone pain
- Sleep problems
- Severe cravings
- Uncontrollable leg movements

Fentanyl overdose

Sometimes, a person with opioid dependence may take fentanyl as a substitute for heroin. The potency of fentanyl and the potential for incorrect dosing can result in overdose and death.

Fentanyl use can result in death even with one dose, especially if a person accidentally takes it incorrectly.

Signs and symptoms of a fentanyl overdose:

- Slow or shallow breathing
- Severe sleepiness
- Cold, clammy skin

- Limp body
- Choking
- Discoloured skin
- Pinpoint pupils

Many fatal overdoses thought to be from heroin have been from fentanyl. A small dose of fentanyl can be fatal depending on how tolerant someone is and their body size.

What is snus?

What is snus?

Snus is a moist, smokeless powdered tobacco. It is sold as a loose powder or pre-packaged in a small sachet (a bit like a mini tea bag). It contains ground tobacco, salt and may contain food-grade smoke aroma flavourings, such as citrus, bergamot, juniper, herb or floral flavours. Most Scandinavian snus is produced in Sweden where it is regulated as a food under the Swedish Food Act. The nicotine content varies among brands. It is used as an alternative to smoking for people trying to give up cigarettes.



Is Snus Illegal in the UK?

- YES. It is illegal to buy and sell snus in the UK, but legal (if you are over the age of 18) to use snus. This includes sharing it with friends.

Why is Snus Illegal in the UK?

- The health authorities in the UK think that snus can cause mouth cancer.

What if an adult buys it for me?

An adult who buys, or attempts to buy, tobacco products such as snus or nicotine inhaling products (including e-cigarettes/vapes or refills), on behalf of a minor (known as proxy purchasing) can be fined up to £5,000. If a young person is sharing out Snus illegally there are serious consequences.

What are some of the possible side effects of snus?

Snus affects users in different ways, however these are due to two main ingredients: **nicotine and tobacco**. Tobacco causes one of the main side-effects of snus – the discolouring of the user's teeth, gum disease (caused by the brown colour of the tobacco) and nausea. Nicotine products used

excessively are likely to have more serious complications. The consumption of too much nicotine can cause nicotine poisoning. Nicotine poisoning requires medical attention; the body will go from the nicotine high (blood pressure and heart rate increasing rapidly, dehydration, headaches and nausea) to the polar opposite (blood pressure drops, heart rate decreases; both of which could, if they drop too low, could cause the user to fall into a coma).

What is Vaping

Vaping is when someone uses a vape or e-cigarette to inhale vapour containing nicotine. They sometimes come in different flavours.

Many people start vaping to try and quit smoking, but this isn't always the case. Vaping can be less harmful than cigarettes, but it is still addictive and isn't considered completely harmless.

If you're vaping, thinking about vaping or you're feeling pressured to vape then it can help to talk about it.



Is vaping addictive?

Yes. Vaping contains nicotine, which is a highly addictive drug. This means that your body and brain will start to feel uncomfortable without the drug, and it can make it harder to stop.

People can become addicted to nicotine even when they don't use it every day.

Vaping and the law

In the UK, it's illegal for anyone to sell nicotine products to someone who's under 18, including for vaping.

It's also against the law for someone to buy nicotine products for someone who's under 18.

Coping with peer pressure

There are lots of reasons you might feel pressured to vape. You might see others enjoying it, want to do it to fit in or have other people tell you it's something to do.

It's not okay for other people to pressure you do to something like vaping or using other drugs.

If you're struggling with peer pressure, there are a few things you can do:

- Practice being assertive: Being assertive isn't the same as being aggressive or rude, it means saying what you want clearly and with confidence. Saying what you want can help people to understand it's your choice, and we've got tips to help.
- Build your confidence: Feeling confident about yourself can make it easier to know what you want without feeling pressured by other people. It can take time to build your confidence, and we've got lots of ideas to help you do it.
- Talk to someone outside the situation: It can feel hard to talk about what you want when everyone around you is vaping. You can always talk to us about what you want and how vaping makes you feel.
- Take time away from people: If someone is making you feel bad about yourself or like you need to do things that you don't want to, then it's okay to take time away from them to focus on yourself and what you want without that pressure.

Children with parents in prison

According to Keeping Children Safe in Education, 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison every year. Many more have a sibling or close family member in prison. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) estimates the figure is closer to 310,000 and reports that 10,000 children visit public prisons every week.

There is, however, no formal record of who these children are and whether they are receiving support, often meaning that they are hidden and struggling alone.

There can be many barriers to children and young people telling us that they have a family member in prison, for example, stigma and embarrassment. You may find that children have not been told the true reason why a family member is not around, yet still have to deal with the loss.

There are a number of services that can offer support and advice to a young person with a family member in prison:

<https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/> Pact is a pioneering national charity that supports prisoners, people with convictions, and their children and families

<https://childrenheardandseen.co.uk/> Children Heard and Seen embraces a holistic, whole-family approach, extending support to those who care for the child while keeping the child at the centre of the support.

