

HOLYHEAD SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

December 2025

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:

- What parents need to know about vaping
- How can kids and teens quit vaping
- How to stay safe travelling to and from school
- How to start a conversation with your child over phone safety

Who to contact if you are concerned about a student at Holyhead school:

Mrs D Denny Lead DSL
ddenny@holyhead.crst.org.uk
Mr D Beale Senior DDSL
dbeale@holyhead.crst.org.uk
Mr F Khan Head of 6th form
fkhan@holyhead.crst.org.uk
Mrs K Robinson SENCO/Mental Health Lead
krobinson@holyhead.crst.org.uk
Mrs S Parker Head of Year 7
sparker@holyhead.crst.org.uk
Mrs T Edwards Head of Year 8
tedwards@holyhead.crst.org.uk
Mrs N Malcolm Head of Year 9
nmalcolm@holyhead.crst.org.uk
Mr L Cain Head of Year 11
lcain@holyhead.crst.org.uk
Miss M Jeffers Head of Year 10
mjeffers@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Telephone the school on 0121 523 1960 to speak to any of the safeguarding team.

Supporting your child to avoid the risks of vaping



1

Talk openly

Ask what your child knows about vapes, listen without judgement and correct myths gently.

2

Share facts

Explain that vapes can be addictive and harmful, even if they seem less dangerous than cigarettes.

3

Set boundaries

Make clear family rules about not vaping, just as you would for smoking or alcohol.

4

Stay alert

Look out for signs such as unexplained sweet smells, coughing or new gadgets/USB-like devices.

5

Seek support

If your child is vaping, speak to the school, your GP or visit resources such as NHS Smokefree for advice.



What parents need to know about Vaping?

E-cigarettes (often called vape pens) are battery-operated vaping devices that heat a liquid until it becomes an aerosol (mist), which is inhaled. The aerosol is not just water vapor. It usually contains nicotine, other harmful chemicals, and flavorings. Even e-cigarettes that claim to have no nicotine have been found to contain nicotine. Some might contain marijuana, herbs, or oils.

Some e-cigarettes are disposable and designed for one-time use. When the liquid is used up or the battery dies, the user throws the device away. Others can be refilled with liquid, recharged, and used over and over. Some people buy pre-filled cartridges for the e-cigarette. Others buy a bottle of liquid and refill the e-cigarette as needed.

What Are the Health Risks of Vaping?

The health risks of vaping include:

- addiction: E-cigarettes contain nicotine, a drug that's highly addictive. You don't have to vape every day to get addicted.
- anxiety and depression: Nicotine makes anxiety and depression worse. It also affects memory, concentration, self-control, and attention, especially in developing brains.
- becoming a smoker: Young people who vape are more likely to start smoking regular (tobacco) cigarettes and may be more likely to develop other addictions

How Can Kids and Teens Quit Vaping?

For those who want to quit, it can help to:

- Decide why they want to quit and write it down or put it in their phone. They can look at the reason(s) when they feel the urge to vape.
- Pick a day to stop vaping. They can put it on the calendar and tell supportive friends and family that they're quitting on that day.
- Chew sugar-free gum or suck on lollipops to help distract them from cravings.
- Get rid of all vaping supplies.
- Download tools (such as apps and texting programs) to their phone that can help with cravings and give encouragement while they're trying to stop vaping. Truth Initiative's [This Is Quitting](#) texting program, for example, can help young people quit vaping. [Smokefree.gov](#) also offers free apps and other tools that can help someone trying to quit smoking or vaping.
- Understand withdrawal. Nicotine addiction leads to very strong cravings for nicotine, especially in the first few days after stopping. It also can lead to headaches; feeling tired, cranky, angry, or depressed; trouble concentrating or sleeping; hunger; and restlessness.

in the future.

- impotence: There is some evidence that vaping can cause sexual dysfunction in men.
- sleep problems
- exposure to cancer-causing chemicals
- chronic [bronchitis](#)
- lung damage that can be life-threatening

Other health effects are possible that we don't yet know about. Vaping hasn't been around that long, so its health risks aren't all known.

How Do I Know if My Child Is Vaping?

Start by asking your child in a nonjudgmental, concerned way if they have tried vaping. You want to encourage conversation, not shut it down. Even if you don't think your kids vape, talk about it with them anyway so they know it's unhealthy.

Signs of vaping include:

- new health issues such as coughing or wheezing
- e-cigarette supplies, like cartridges or other suspicious looking items
- new smells (some flavored e-cigarettes have been banned, but many remain on the market — so parents might notice fruity or sweet scents)

How to stay safe walking home from school on dark evening

As we approach the end of the year and the weather is getting colder and the evenings are getting darker earlier, we have put together a list of ways in which you can support your child in staying safe whilst travelling to and from school.

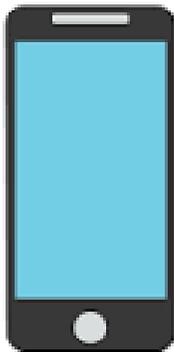
On the go

- Improve visibility: Wear reflective clothing, bright accessories, or use flashing lights to be easily seen by drivers.
- Stay aware: Avoid wearing headphones and stay alert to surroundings, especially when walking near roads, car parks, or alleys.
- Walk in groups: It is safer to travel with a friend or in a group.
- Plan your route: Stick to well-lit and familiar paths. Avoid short cuts through dark alleys, parks, or unlit areas.
- Carry a torch: A small torch or headtorch is helpful for seeing and for being seen in poorly lit areas.
- Walk against traffic: If a pavement is unavailable, walk facing oncoming traffic.
- Keep a charged phone: A fully charged phone is essential for communication and emergencies. Consider a portable charger.

General safety

- Trust your instincts: If a situation feels wrong, trust your gut and remove yourself from it.
- Keep valuables hidden: Do not flaunt expensive items. Be cautious when using cash machines.
- Stay calm: In an emergency, try to stay calm to make good decisions.
- Make contact: Let a trusted adult know where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Use emergency apps: Some smartphones have built-in panic features or apps that can send your location to emergency contacts.

How to start a conversation with your child about using a phone safely:



■ Why do you want to get a phone?

Whilst deciding if it is time for your child to have their first phone can be a great opportunity to find out what your child expects to use their phone for. This could be for connecting with friends, playing games, for keeping in touch whilst out of the house or other reasons.

▲ What do you like about using your phone?

You can ask your child about their favourite apps or games, what they like using their phone for, or you can ask them to show you how to play or use their favourite game or website.

● What would you do if something worrying or upsetting happened on your phone?

You can ask them about the places they can go to find the safety advice, find out what they know about privacy settings, and ask them how to report or block on the services they use.

◆ How can we do more online together?

Ask your child about activities or games that you could enjoy as a family, this can be a great time to establish a family agreement to manage your families time online.



Talk with your child about responsible use of their phone

Discuss what is okay and not okay to use their phone for. Talk about time limits and expectations of where the device can and cannot be used, this could include things like the phone being charged outside their bedroom overnight.



Discuss what to do if something upsetting or worrying happens

Give them the strategies they need in case something concerning happens whilst they are using their device. This could be to lock the screen and tell an adult, to make a report to the platform they are using, or to block the user.



Explore parental controls

Take a look at the controls available both on the phone itself and on your home Wi-Fi. Talk these through with your child too. Parental controls are a helpful tool, but an open conversation with your child is the most important thing.