



School vaping policy template for Scotland



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Background

What are vaping products/ devices?

E-cigarette, or vaping products can be used to deliver nicotine, flavourings, chemicals, and other substances. They are known by many different names and come in many shapes, sizes, and device types.

Using an e-cigarette is often referred to as “vaping” and the products may be referred to as “vapes”. There are legal as well as illicit vaping products for adults. Some illegal vapes have been found to contain drugs such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main psychoactive ingredient in cannabis, or synthetic cannabinoids, commonly known as ‘spice’.

‘Vapes can be used to help adults who smoke to quit, but are illegal to be sold or given to young people under the age of 18. Vaping is not risk-free, particularly for young people and those who have never smoked’.

What is the law relating to vapes and vaping?

Vapes should be treated in the same way as other school policies for substances that are illegal for under 18’s such as alcohol or tobacco.

- Selling a nicotine inhaling product to anyone aged under 18 is a criminal offence. This includes both devices, cartridges and refill substances (e-liquids). THC vape juice is illegal in the UK regardless of age.
- Buying a nicotine inhaling product for anyone under 18 is a criminal offence (what is known as a proxy sale, where an adult buys the product for the young person).
- As with alcohol, it is **not** illegal for someone under the age of 18 to vape or possess a vape or nicotine products, it is the sale or supply of nicotine products, including vapes that is illegal.

Please note that from the 1st June 2025 any single use disposable vape is now illegal and therefore unregulated. A reusable vape must be rechargeable and refillable, meaning it has to have a battery and needs to have either a

removable and replaceable coil or a chamber, pod or tank that can be refilled with e-liquid.

To be considered reusable, replacement components like pre-filled pods, e-liquid refill bottles and coils must be separately available to buy either in-store or online.

You can check whether specific products are legal by checking the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency’s notified products list [cms.mhra.gov.uk/ecig-new](https://www.cms.mhra.gov.uk/ecig-new)

If you search for a product and it doesn’t appear, it means it is illegal as all legal nicotine-containing vapes are listed.

Reporting illicit vapes and underage sales

Anyone selling or supplying vapes, or tobacco illegally should be reported to trading standards through the Citizens Advice online portal citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards/ or via Citizens Advice Consumer Service for free on 0800 028 1456. They will log the report and alert Trading Standards. This service can be used to report anonymously if preferred.

Disposal of vapes and vaping liquids

Vapes contain electrical components, including lithium-ion batteries, and are therefore considered Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), in UK law. Such equipment should never be disposed of in household waste and should instead be handed in to an approved collector of WEEE waste.

Larger vape stores may operate collection points, or you can contact your local authority waste service for further information.

Storage

The lithium-ion batteries contained in vapes have, in isolated incidents, ignited when damaged or improperly stored. The advice is to store them in a clearly marked container, away from flammable material (and for no longer than necessary) until they can be safely disposed of.

More can be learned here: eco-recycle.co.uk/sgf-recover-vape-recycling-scotland/.

Testing services to see if vapes contain Spice/THC or other illicit substances

WEDINOS is a national harm reduction project supported by Public Health Wales. They provide a free, anonymous sample testing service and collect the data to understand the drug supply in Wales and across the UK. wedinos.org

Suspect vapes can be mailed to WEDINOS Project Cardiff Toxicology Laboratories 4th Floor, Academic Centre University Hospital Llandough Penarth CF64 2XX)

Why is there a concern about vaping amongst young people?

1. Health effects including nicotine dependency

Vaping is not risk-free, particularly for young people and those who have never smoked. Vaping can lead to both short and medium term health impacts.

Using nicotine from a young age can harm young people's brain development, affecting the parts of the brain that influence concentration levels, learning ability, mood, and self-control.

Nicotine is a stimulant drug which is highly addictive. Using nicotine during teenage years may lead to subsequent dependency of nicotine and other substances.

There is growing evidence that suggests that vapes can negatively impact heart health, including increased heart rate and blood pressure.

Vapes may also impact on young people's developing lungs, particularly in those who already have asthma or other respiratory health issues.

Signs and symptoms of nicotine dependency/withdrawal may include:

Mood changes, irritability, poor behaviour, hyperactivity, headaches inability to concentrate.

Symptoms of regular/high nicotine intake may include:

Cough, throat irritation, dizziness, and nausea.

2. Vaping and its impact on subsequent tobacco use and other substances

There are growing concerns due to emerging evidence that vaping may lead some young people to take up tobacco smoking with all its known harmful effects and increase the risk of experimenting with other addictive substances.

How can schools respond to and address vaping amongst young people?

Schools may need to tackle problem behaviour associated with vaping, which might include:

- A young person vaping in school or on school property.
- A young person reported to be vaping in the local community.
- A young person selling vapes to other pupils or peers.
- A young person being exploited to sell vapes to pupils and peers.
- A young person being given a vape by a parent as a harm reduction measure compared to smoking.
- A young person with vapes in their possession at school.

Whole school approaches to health and wellbeing are effective in meeting the needs of the school community across multiple health and wellbeing outcomes. Embedding the components of a whole school approach can have a positive impact on managing vape, tobacco, alcohol or substance use.

Following up on vaping behaviour

Schools should consider embedding a process to respond when vapes are identified on school premises or vaping behaviour is observed, or reported in the setting or school community. This might involve:

- Exploring any safeguarding concerns, mental or physical health concerns, or other potential risk behaviours, such as substance use.
- Exploring how any vapes were obtained and reporting any illegal sales/supply to trading standards or the school police officer (if there is one).
- Communication with parents or carers about the pupil's behaviour and the school's policy
- Making relevant referrals, or providing advice & signposting to the pupil and their family.
- Responding to any safety incidents.
- Awareness of and responding to any social media trends
- Explaining the rationale for confiscation and safe disposal of the vapes and vaping/nicotine products.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde advises schools to take three key actions in relation to vaping, which can help facilitate an appropriate curriculum and implementation of a whole school approach to health and wellbeing.

When developing policy on vapes, it is recommended that schools prioritise reducing vaping among pupils and treat vapes in the same way as other age restricted products, such as alcohol and tobacco, by prohibiting them onsite as a first step, and then confiscating and disposing of them. In cases where vapes have been mixed with illegal substances, first aid may need to be administered. As such, schools should ensure any first aid policies are up to date.

Review school policies and practices

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Improvement team recommends schools create, implement and maintain a policy on vaping/ e-cigarettes and that it should accompany their school's drugs, tobacco and alcohol policies to maintain consistency.

Key action 1: Schools vaping or smoking use policy

Based on National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines the policy should:

- Clearly apply the same prohibitions to vaping device use on the school site as it does to cigarettes/tobacco products.
- Apply to the whole school community (for example staff, visitors and contractors as well as learners).
- Apply to the whole of the school grounds (for example car parks and other outdoor spaces).
- Apply to all school-related activity (e.g. school trips or events).
- Apply to the school premises outside of school hours (for example when being used by the community for after-hours events).
- Include the permanent confiscation of prohibited items. This should apply to vaping devices, pouches as well as to cigarettes.
- Include clear processes for reporting known sources of illegal tobacco/ vapes.
- Be clear about the involvement of other agencies.

- Identify sources of support for young people experiencing signs of nicotine dependency and sign post to NHSGGC resources and Quit Your Way Scotland.

Quit your way Youth - NHSGGC
[nhs.uk/quit-your-way/quit-your-way-youth/](https://nhs.uk/quit-your-way/youth/)

Vaping addiction soon takes hold - NHS inform
[nhsinform.scot/campaigns/vaping/](https://nhs.uk/quit-your-way/youth/)

Stop vaping tips for young people - NHSGGC
[nhs.uk/quit-your-way/youth/stop-vaping-tips-for-young-people/](https://nhs.uk/quit-your-way/youth/)

- Be developed with learners, staff and the wider school community
- Be effectively communicated to everyone it affects so that they are aware of the content
- Include asking people not to vape directly outside your school grounds

Key action 2: Behaviour policies and practice

The school policy should also outline safeguarding and supporting procedures for pupils using or possessing vapes, e liquids or any nicotine product, with the aim of ensuring young people are offered and given the support they need as a priority rather than punitive measures unless supply is involved. This might involve:

- Exploring any safeguarding concerns, mental or physical health concerns, or other potential risk behaviours, such as substance use.
 - Exploring how any confiscated vapes were obtained and reporting any illegal sales.
 - Communication with parents or carers about the pupil's behaviour, the school's policy, and rationale for the confiscation, disposal of the vapes and vaping products, and any suggested onward support.
- An option is to request a signed returned letter from a parent/carers to confirm that they will support the pupil and the school in ensuring vapes or e liquids are not brought into school
- Responding to any safety incidents.
 - Awareness of and responding to any social media trends.

Key action 3: Signposting young people identified as using vapes, with their consent to further information and resources.

Stop vaping tips for young people - NHSGGC
nhsggc.scot/downloads/stop-vaping-tips-for-young-people/

Vaping addiction soon takes hold - NHS inform
nhsinform.scot/campaigns/vaping/

NHSGGC - The risks of vaping
youtube.com/watch?v=Z3Uc6SkwH7A
ggc.quityourway.schools@nhs.scot

Sample model policy for adaption as needed

This model policy can be adapted to meet the specific needs of your school community while adhering to Scottish laws and public health priorities.

School Vaping Policy draft

Different options for aims:

Aims of the policy

The policy seeks to:

- Provide a no smoking or vaping environment both within the school building and grounds that protects the health of the whole school community and visitors to our schools.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle by providing excellent role models for all young people and adults within the school.
- Equip young people with the social skills that enable them to resist the pressure to smoke, vape or use nicotine products either from their peer group, or from society in general.
- To set the example of a health promoting smoke, vape and nicotine free environment to all of our schools and wider community in line with government guidance and local priorities to reduce the prevalence of smoking or vaping and the associated risks.
- Guarantee the right of people who don't smoke or vape to breath in air that is free from second hand smoke or vapour.'
- Raise awareness of the dangers associated with exposure to tobacco smoke and the unknown long term risks of vaping or nicotine. The long term effects of second hand vapour inhalation are yet unknown.
- Take into account the needs of those who smoke or vape and to support those who wish to stop.

or

Purpose

This policy aims to promote a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all members of the school community by addressing the use of vaping devices, e liquids and nicotine products. It aligns with Scottish laws and public health guidance to protect young people from the harmful effects of vaping and nicotine addiction.

Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, visitors, contractors, and the wider school community. It covers all school premises, grounds, and school-related activities, including trips, events, and after-hours use of school facilities.

Policy Statements

1. Prohibition of Use and Possession

- The use, possession, or distribution of vaping devices, e liquids and nicotine pouches are strictly prohibited on school premises, including car parks and outdoor spaces, and during school-related activities.
- This prohibition applies to all members of the school community, including staff, visitors, and contractors.
- Staff members are expected to inform visitors of the no smoking or vaping policy. However, they are not expected to enter into any confrontation which may put their personal safety at risk.

2. Confiscation and Disposal

Any vaping devices, e liquids or nicotine products found on school premises will be permanently confiscated and disposed of. As the lithium-ion batteries contained in vapes have, in isolated incidents, ignited when damaged or been improperly stored they will be stored in a clearly marked container, away from flammable material until they can be safely disposed of via a WEEE facility. More can be learned here: Sustainable Vaping Solutions - Vape Recycling in Scotland.



Reporting Illegal Sales

The school will report suspected proxy sales (adults purchasing vaping products for under-18s) or sales by retailers to under 18's as well as incidences where vapes are suspected to contain illegal substances, Reports will be made to trading standards through the Citizens Advice online portal citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards/ or via Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0800 028 1456 who will log the report and alert trading standards Safe guarding and first aid policies will be followed if necessary.

1. Support for pupils

- Pupils found using or possessing vaping devices will be referred to the designated safeguarding lead.
- The school will prioritize support over punitive measures, offering resources and sign posting to how to cut down and quit vaping.
- Parents/carers will be informed, and a signed acknowledgment may be requested to reinforce the message at home

2. Health Education

- The school will incorporate awareness education on vaping and its health implications for young people into its Health and Wellbeing curriculum.
- The school will seek guidance and advice from specialist support services such as NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Inform (see appendix)

3. Community Awareness

- The school will actively communicate this policy to all members of the school community, ensuring awareness of its content and purpose.
- Visitors will be asked not to vape directly outside school grounds.

Policy Development and Review

This policy has been developed in consultation with students, staff, and the wider school community. It will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and up-to-date with current laws and best practices.

Implementation

The school leadership team will ensure this policy is effectively communicated and enforced. Staff will receive training on identifying signs of nicotine dependency and supporting affected students. The policy will be reviewed in line with the schools review cycle to ensure that it continues to meet the aims.

Policy Agreed:

Signed Head Teacher

Signed Chair of Directors/Governors

Policy to be reviewed:

ENDS



Sources of Support for schools



NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

- Advice leaflet for young people looking to cut down or quit vaping

nhs.uk/health/quit-your-way/quit-your-way-youth/

nhs.uk/health/quit-your-way/quit-your-way-youth/

Quit your way Youth - NHS GGC

nhs.uk/health/quit-your-way/quit-your-way-youth/

Quit Your Way Scotland

This is a support service for anyone in Scotland of any age, run by NHS 24. You can phone a trained advisor on 0800 84 84 84 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) or visit the NHS Inform website for more information

nhs.uk/health/quit-your-way/quit-your-way-youth/

To find out more about what our services can offer call the Quit Your Way service on 0800 916 8858 or

nhs.uk/health/quit-your-way/

NHS Inform Directory of local Health and Wellbeing services for Greater Glasgow and Clyde

[nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/health-and-wellbeing-services](https://nhs.uk/health/quit-your-way/)

ASH

Young People and Vaping - ASH Scotland
ashscotland.org.uk/get-support/working-with-young-people/young-people-vaping/

Breathing Space

Breathing Space is a free confidential service for people in Scotland. Open up when you're feeling down - phone 0800 83 85 87

Weekdays: Monday-Thursday 6pm to 2am
Weekend: Friday 6pm-Monday 6am

Crew

Crew offers professional training and Nightlife Harm Reduction services nationally; a Drop-in based in the city centre of Edinburgh in addition to a free person-centred counselling service.
crew.scot/

Scottish Drugs Forum

The Scottish Drugs Forum aims to improve Scotland's approach to drug-related issues. It influences this through its work by striving for compassionate, inclusive, evidence-informed policy and practice
sdf.org.uk

Talk About Trust

The Talk About Trust aims to keep young people safe around alcohol and other substances, improve life chances and reduce negative risk taking. It supports teachers, parents, carers, community leaders and those under 25
talkabouttrust.org

Talk to Frank

National helpline for advice on drugs and substance use, including a national 24-hour helpline and website offering information and advice to anybody concerned about drugs and substance use.

talktofrank.com Call: 0300 123 6600

Young Scot

Information and resources for young people on vaping and health. Truth About E-cigarettes –
young.scot/get-informed/the-truth-about-e-cigarettes/