



MINARET COLLEGE

Islamic College of Melbourne South and East

12 February 2024

Assalamu alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh parents,

InshaAllah this letter finds you in the best state of health and iman.

I am writing to you on a matter of great importance. Surveys have shown that increasing numbers of teens and young adults are now using e-cigarettes, also known as vapes. Worryingly, the surveys also show that around 14 per cent of students aged 12-17 years old have used a vape.

Vaping and its effects

Vapes are battery operated devices that heat up a liquid until it becomes vapour which is then inhaled. This vapour is a fine mist, which contains chemicals including nicotine, which when inhaled, enters the lungs, causing the small particles to lodge in the lungs. Vaping devices are made to look like pens, USB devices or highlighters to avoid raising suspicion.

It is important to note that most vapes that are labelled nicotine-free in Australia do contain nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive, and can harm your child's brain development and affect memory and concentration. Vaping can also cause vomiting, coughing, mouth irritation and asthma, and can lead to lung damage, heart disease and cancers.

The College's mitigating actions

Minaret College is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all our students. As such, we are installing vape detectors which are able to sense vaping activity, and identify students who were in the area. These detectors, which are placed in areas where students may vape, take our privacy obligations into account.

As stated in our [Student Discipline Policy](#), vaping constitutes a Level 4 offence. After an investigation is completed, if a student has been identified to have committed an offence, the consequence will be expulsion (see [Suspension and Expulsion Policy](#)). We take this strong position to ensure students understand the serious nature of vaping and it is also hoped that the consequence will serve as a deterrent. We are committed to keeping our students safe in an Islamic environment.

OFFICER CAMPUS

67 Tivendale Road Officer VIC 3809
T 03 5943 2058

SPRINGVALE CAMPUS (HEAD OFFICE)

36-38 Lewis Street Springvale VIC 3171
T 03 9574 0567

DOVETON CAMPUS

146 Kiddy Road Doveton VIC 3177
T 03 9238 4200

What parents can do

Be aware of the harmful effects of vaping, and watch for signs that your child could be vaping. [These signs include include:](#)

- physical symptoms like a sore throat, coughing, breathing difficulty, chest pain, vomiting or headaches
- signs of nicotine addiction or withdrawal
- smelling like fruit or candy
- have new or unusual devices that look like highlighters, pens, USB drives or small boxes.

Talk to your teen about the dangers of vaping, and highlight the impact to their health and schoolwork. Do also inform them that the College is able to identify vaping, and the consequences, as a deterrent.

Seek help if needed. Inform your child's coach if you suspect that your child is vaping, so that they too can provide assistance. Fact sheets have been included with this letter. You may also call the Quit Victoria Quitline (137848) for free advice or refer to the following website [Quit Victoria | E-cigarettes and teens: what you need to know](#)

May Allah (SWT) ease us in our affairs and protect and guide our students. Ameen.

Kind regards,



Mohammed Taksim
Executive Principal

Smoking and Vaping: Advice for Parents

Help your child understand the facts and the health risks of smoking and vaping.

What is smoking and vaping?

Smoking is burning something to breathe smoke into the lungs, such as a cigarette. Vaping is breathing in vapor from heated liquid.

Both smoking and vaping involve breathing in chemicals that can harm your health.

E-cigarettes or vapes heat liquid to create an aerosol that is breathed in, which is known as vaping. E-cigarettes can look like a highlighter, a pen or USB.

What is in vaping liquid?

There are no quality or safety standards for e-cigarettes, vapes or vaping liquids.

Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine which is harmful and addictive. Even those labelled nicotine-free can still contain nicotine.

The aerosol or vapor from e-cigarettes contains cancer-causing chemicals and heavy metals.

How vaping affects your child's body

Vaping can cause significant harm to your child's body:

- Short-term it can cause vomiting, nausea, coughing, shortness of breath, mouth irritation and asthma
- Long-term it can cause lung damage, heart disease and cancers.

E-cigarettes are still being studied, but most experts think it is likely vaping will cause lung and mouth cancers.

Nicotine is a poison that can make people sick if swallowed, and it has been linked to deaths of small children.

Exposing children and teens to nicotine can harm their brain development and lead to higher risk of dependence. Children and teens who use e-cigarettes are more than three times more likely to move onto smoking cigarettes.

E-cigarettes can also explode and catch fire.

Protecting your child

Research shows that children are less likely to smoke or vape if their primary role models (typically parents or carers) do not smoke or vape.

If you have found quitting difficult and still smoke or vape, share your experiences with your child. Ask your children for their support during your next quit attempt. If your child can witness how tough quitting can be, they may want to steer clear of smoking or vaping completely.

The best way to protect your children is to never smoke or vape in the house or other places where there may be children nearby. Smoking or vaping in a car when children are present is illegal. Passive exposure to e-cigarette aerosol can be damaging for children and young people.

Vaping laws

Smoking and vaping is banned in and around schools

The Tobacco Act 1987 bans smoking or vaping on school premises or within 4 metres of any pedestrian access point to school premises. The smoking and vaping ban applies to:

- anyone present on school premises during and outside of school hours including students, teachers, and school visitors
- all activities that take place on school premises.

Smoking and vaping are also not permitted during school events and excursions held off school premises.

Health and retail laws

It is illegal for any person:

- to sell, barter or exchange any type of tobacco or e-cigarette product to a person under 18 years of age
- to possess an e-cigarette containing nicotine, unless they have a doctor's prescription
- to smoke or vape in a motor vehicle if a person under 18 years is also present in the motor vehicle.

You can report retailers selling e-cigarette products to children to your local council.

Talking to your child or teen about smoking and vaping

As a parent or carer, you have an important role in protecting your child from smoking and vaping. Parent views on smoking and vaping can influence their children's behaviours. The most important thing you can do is to talk to your child or teen about smoking, vaping and other drugs.

Use these strategies to talk with your child or teen.

Start with information

Get the key facts, learn the basics about smoking and vaping products, and think through what you want to say. Consider some questions you might be asked, and how you want to respond.

Approach it calmly

Start the conversation when you're doing an activity together, such as driving or preparing a meal. Keep things casual and relaxed. Use something you saw in a TV show or on the news as a chance to bring up the issue.

Don't make assumptions

If you think your child may have tried smoking or vaping, avoid making accusations. Some experts do not recommend searching your child's space for evidence of smoking or vaping, because it can undermine their trust.

Avoid judging or lecturing

Listen to their point of view and keep it a two-way conversation. Being mindful to keep your body language and tone respectful can go a long way. If your child has tried smoking or vaping, consider asking questions like: 'what made you want to try?' and 'how did it make you feel?'

Don't exaggerate

Make sure you are honest about potential harms and avoid exaggerated statements.

Focus on health and explain your concerns

Talk about how you care about your child's health. For example, if your child tells you they are smoking or vaping, you can say you are concerned about the health risks and share the evidence that this can affect adolescent brain development and risk of cancer.

Where to get help

Support and resources are available to help you talk to your child about smoking and vaping

Quit Victoria

Offers resources, information and support for people to quit smoking and vaping as well as factsheets for parents and children. www.quit.org.au/articles/teenvaping

The Royal Children's Hospital

The e-cigarettes and teens factsheet has information on how to talk to teens about the health risks of using e-cigarettes and a podcast episode on vaping created by paediatricians.

www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/E-cigarettes_and_teens

Better Health Channel

Information on the health effects of smoking, strategies for quitting, statistics and Victoria's laws on smoking, the dangers of e-cigarettes, liquid used in e-cigarettes and the dangers of nicotine poisoning. www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/smoking-and-tobacco

Your family doctor

Your family doctor is a good place to start for further information and advice regarding smoking and vaping and your child.

Advice services

- **Quitline** provide advice and confidential counselling, including for children from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday. Phone 13 78 48 or go to www.quit.org.au
- **DirectLine** is a state-wide alcohol and other drugs advice service offering confidential counselling and referral 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Phone 1800 888 236 or go to www.directline.org.au
- **Youth, Drugs and Alcohol Advice** provide a youth-specific advice service from 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday. Phone 1800 458 685
- **Alcohol and Drug Foundation** advice line 1300 85 85 84
- **Headspace** offer mental health support online, by phone and in person through headspace centres. Go to www.headspace.org.au

More information

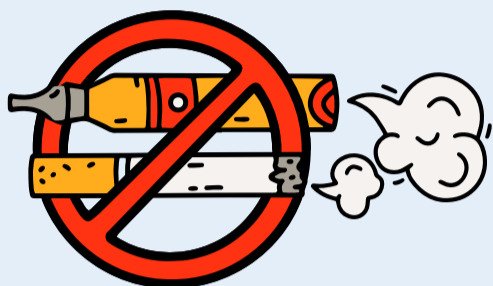
This factsheet has been prepared using information and research from:

- QUIT - www.quit.org.au/articles/teenvaping
- Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/smoking-and-tobacco
- Royal Children's Hospital - www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/E-cigarettes_and_teens
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation - <https://adf.org.au/talking-about-drugs/parenting/vaping-youth/talking-about-vaping/>
- Cancer Council Victoria - www.tobaccoinaustralia.org.au
- Tobacco Act 1987 - www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/tobacco-act-1987/095

Get the facts about smoking and vaping

What are your kids breathing in?

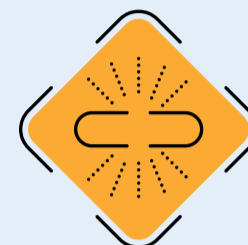
E-cigarettes and vapes are not safer than cigarettes



There are no quality or safety standards for e-cigarettes or vapes



Vaping liquids contain nicotine, heavy metals and cancer-causing chemicals



What it does to your body:

Vaping can cause vomiting, nausea, coughing, shortness of breath, mouth irritation and asthma



Long term use can cause lung damage, heart disease and cancers



Nicotine harms the brain development of children and teenagers



Young people who vape are more than three times more likely to move onto smoking cigarettes



Talk to your kids about the risks of smoking and vaping

- Contact Quit at www.quit.org.au or phone **13 78 48**
- Visit the Royal Children's Hospital website www.rch.org.au and search 'vaping'

- Scan the QR code for more information



www.quit.org.au/articles/teenvaping/