



Parental Guidance: Vaping and Substance Misuse

As young people grow, they may encounter situations where vaping, alcohol or other substances are present. While curiosity and peer influence can play a role, these behaviours can carry health risks and may sometimes signal wider wellbeing concerns.

This guide provides information to help parents understand the potential harms of vaping and substance misuse, recognise early warning signs, and start supportive conversations that encourage safer choices.

Understanding potential harms

Many young people perceive vaping as harmless, but it can still carry risks, particularly for developing bodies and brains. Regular vaping may expose young people to nicotine, which can be addictive and affect concentration, mood and sleep. Other substances, including alcohol or drugs, can also impact judgement, behaviour and physical health.

Open conversations about these risks can help young people make more informed decisions.

Recognising possible warning signs

Changes in behaviour do not always indicate substance use, but some patterns may be worth exploring:

- Sudden changes in friendship groups
- Increased secrecy around belongings or online activity
- Changes in mood, motivation or behaviour
- Unusual smells on clothing or belongings
- Declining engagement with school or usual activities

Early awareness allows families to address concerns before behaviours become more established.

Starting supportive conversations

Young people are more likely to talk openly when conversations feel calm and non-judgemental:

- Choose a quiet moment rather than raising concerns during conflict
- Ask open questions and listen to your child's perspective
- Focus on understanding rather than immediately imposing consequences

Maintaining trust helps young people feel safe sharing their experiences.



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Supporting safer choices

Parents can help teenagers build confidence to resist pressure:

- Discuss realistic situations they might face with friends
- Talk about ways to say no or leave uncomfortable situations
- Reinforce that safety and wellbeing are more important than fitting in

Encouraging independent decision-making can help young people feel more confident in their choices.

When to seek additional support

If concerns about vaping or substance misuse become ongoing or begin affecting behaviour, wellbeing or school engagement, further support may be appropriate.

Families may wish to:

- Contact their child's College Pastoral Team for guidance
- Seek advice from a GP or local youth support services
- Access specialist services that support young people with substance misuse

Working together with families, school and support services can help ensure young people receive the guidance and support they need.

Working together with the Academy

If concerns arise, families are encouraged to contact their child's College Pastoral Team so that school and home can work together to support the student effectively.

Contacting College Pastoral Teams

Angelou College - angelou@stationers.latrust.org.uk
Caxton College - caxton@stationers.latrust.org.uk
Hansard College - hansard@stationers.latrust.org.uk
Equiano College - equiano@stationers.latrust.org.uk
Woolf Sixth Form College - woolf@stationers.latrust.org.uk