



Want to Prevent or Reduce Vaping at Your Elementary School?

Student vaping is a complex issue, and it can be challenging to address. Here are key, ready to go resources that you can use to enhance school climate, while meeting Ministry of Education objectives to reduce vaping.

Our Guiding Principles (Why is This Important)

- Schools and educators play a vital role in shaping the health and wellbeing of young people.
- Many traditional approaches to addressing substance use (e.g., zero tolerance, abstinence only education, stand-alone presentations or demonstrations by guest speakers) have limited effectiveness and can produce unintended consequences.
- The best strategies often have nothing to do with substance use, but focus on enhancing protective factors – the things that make a person less likely to use substances, such as:
 - » establish supportive environments and connectedness at school,
 - » build the caring relationships that are available to young people,
 - » create and sustain a mentally healthy classroom, and
 - » promote student wellbeing - supporting their healthy physical, mental, & emotional development.
- **The opposite of addiction isn't sobriety, it's connection.**
- Efforts must reflect school communities' unique needs, values, preferences, and contexts.

Using these strategies will increase young people's resilience, help them develop lifelong critical thinking skills, promote positive behaviors, encourage self-awareness, and create a culture where informed choices are valued and practiced.

Why Are We Concerned About Vaping and Nicotine Products?

- Nicotine can cause issues with attention, learning, mood, and impulse control, and can cause long-term functional & structural issues in the developing adolescent brain.
- Vaping is not harmless!
 - » Emerging evidence shows that vaping and smoking show similar risks for heart and lung diseases.
 - » People that smoke AND vape are at even more risk.
- Smoking, vaping, or cannabis use on school property could result in a fine under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.
- Many vape and nicotine brands are owned by conventional tobacco companies.
- Vaping products are not an approved or recognized cessation aid.

These points can be shared in discussions with youth to help inform them about risks of vaping





Here's How We Implement It

Best practice for addressing vaping means using the [Foundations for a Healthy School Framework](#) and implementing **multiple activities in parallel** to achieve the goals of prevention, cessation, and safety across different areas of the school community.

- The Foundations for a Healthy School is a framework that outlines how to develop a learning environment that promotes and supports child and student wellbeing, and
- Using the Healthy School Framework means that “schools are addressing health in a holistic way and contributing to a positive school climate in which positive relationships between school staff, parents, students, and community partners are developed and sustained.”

Implement activities towards these 3 strategies:

1. Prevention

- Hinges on connection.
- Student engagement, belonging, & healthy relationships are vital.

2. Cessation

- Needs empathy and wrap around support.
- Meeting students where they are at is critical.
- Vaping impacts every student:
 - » Student athletes may experience decreased lung capacity.
 - » Students with academic goals may experience reduced test scores.
 - » Students experiencing financial hardships will save money by quitting.
 - » Students with behaviour issues may be less focused with continued use.

3. Safety

- Means ensuring policies are in place & enforced to create safe environments and maintain safe environments.





Elementary School Resources Package

Prevention

- **Whole School Leadership & Physical/Social Environments**
 - » Administrators, use this [Reflection tool](#) to reflect on core elements of mentally healthy schools, to support overall school improvement planning
- **Student Engagement**
 - » Engage students using campaign materials like [posters](#) and/or school-wide [announcements](#) (notanexperiment.ca)
- **Home/School/Community Connection - Parent Engagement**
 - » [Parent handout](#) to encourage continuing the conversation at home
- **Classroom & Curriculum Supports**
 - » For grades 5-8, download these Curriculum-linked lesson plans in your class, created by the by the Canadian Lung Association. Download the program booklet here – [Lungs are for Life](#)
 - » Looking for more, check out [Not An Experiment](#) which provides educators with curriculum linked (& school board approved) resources to address youth vaping (critical thinking, health effects, etc.); in particular it includes the “Escape the Experiment”, escape room activity. (PPH has the kit you can borrow)

Cessation

- **Whole School Leadership & Physical/Social Environments**
 - » Wondering how to talk to a young person about vaping? Watch the videos in the [Brief Conversations Toolkit](#) with examples on how to start brief conversations on quitting.
- **Student Engagement**
 - » Promote the [Quash app](#) to students ready to quit smoking or vaping. Developed by the Lung Foundation, it’s a judgement-free app to help you quit smoking or vaping – the way you want!
- **Home/School/Community Connection**
 - » Share this [conversation guide](#) with parents, so conversations can continue at home.

Safety

- **Whole School Leadership & Physical/Social Environments**
 - » The [Smoke-Free Ontario Act \(SFOA\)](#) prohibits the use of tobacco, vaping, and cannabis products on school property and within 20m of its grounds. In alignment with the SFOA and PPM 128, it’s important to establish school policies and ensure they are clear and balanced to create a positive school climate that is safe, supportive and vapour/smoke free
- **Student Engagement**
 - » Consider a campaign to make school policy more visible and keep it top of mind for students and staff:
 - ♦ [Take the Clouds Outside](#) an immersive, eye-catching display to highlight the dangers of secondhand vapour, how vaping affects mental health, the fines associated with vaping on school property and links to quit supports.
 - » Consider alternatives to suspension for students caught vaping, that include support and building connection/engagement for students, such as:
 - ♦ A self-paced module from Stanford University [Healthy Futures](#)
 - ♦ Giving back/in school [community service opportunities](#)
 - ♦ [Mentoring programs](#)
- **Home/School/Community Connection**
 - » Contact your Tobacco Enforcement Officer for support with navigating when smoking/vaping rules are broken - [report SFOA violations](#)