

July 23, 2024

Dear Parents / Guardians,

The Palmerton Area Senior and Junior High Schools, just like other school districts, have had issues in our schools with vaping. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the issue, give you resources if you feel your child is involved in this kind of behavior, as well as alert you to possible repercussions if your child engages in vaping on school property. We take this issue very seriously due to the negative health effects vaping can have on our students. We also find that our parents are often not aware of the risks around vaping or that their child vapes. For the 2023-2024 school year, we installed Vape Sensors in the junior high school and senior high school bathrooms. For this school year, we have also installed a sensor in our nurse's office. The sensors will alert school staff immediately when there is a detectable anomaly in the air. This will allow us to respond and hopefully address the core of the vaping problem. After analyzing the data from last year, we showed a substantial decrease in vaping discipline incidents. The sensors clearly have served as a deterrent.

Student vaping may be due to an addiction to nicotine that students have developed. It could also simply be the result of peer pressure or just curiosity. Besides the serious health risks that are associated with vaping, students are spending an excessive amount of time out of class when they are doing this. Student vaping generally correlates to lower grades and a lower understanding of class material. Additionally, vaping on school grounds negatively impacts other students and staff members. People are exposed to harmful vapors and are also put in a very uncomfortable situation by having to witness things. This has an overall negative impact on our school community.

Vaping is the act of inhaling a vapor produced from an electronic vaporizer or e-cigarette. The vape can contain nicotine and other substance which is also concerning. The liquids that are vaporized come in many different flavors and might even smell fruity. For example, many of the flavors of these liquid concentrates are sweet and have a variety of names such as grape, strawberry, bubblegum, and lemonade. The vaporizers come in all different shapes. Some common styles are a thick pen, a stylus for an iPad, a flash drive, and a small flask with a round chimney coming off the top. Like cigarettes, stores are not supposed to sell it to people under the age of 21. However, students have reported that they have purchased them in stores, online, from older siblings, friends, or unfortunately, even parents. While we are certain that there are many stores that are vigilant about selling to people under the age of 21, there are obviously some that are not.

The Surgeon General reports that nicotine is addictive and can harm brain development. We know that using nicotine may make it harder for school-related tasks such as learning, concentration, peer pressure, and the implications on various societal norms such as being on time to class and school.

Vaping is prohibited by the Junior and Senior High School Student Handbooks / Code of Conduct. Parents must sign that they are in receipt of the Student Handbook and have reviewed

the document carefully with their child. When a vape detector is triggered and the student is seen going into the bathroom by investigating the vape camera located outside the bathroom doors, the student will be “searched” following district policy 226.

While we have certainly tried to be as proactive as possible by educating students on the risks of vaping, there will be consequences for students possessing or using a vape on school district property. These consequences can include citations, police involvement, security guard involvement, suspensions, and parent contact. Our goal is to partner with parents to help support our students to make good decisions for themselves and their school community.

Please consider having a conversation with your child today about this important issue. Together we can work towards a healthy future for our youth. Below are some resources for parents on vaping. Thank you for your continued support of our schools.

Sincerely,

Paula A. Husar	High School Principal
Rich DeSocio	Junior High School Principal
Dave Sodl	Secondary Assistant Principal

cc: Mr. Ryan Kish    Interim Superintendent of Schools

### **Resources**

Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes – <https://www.cdc.gov> – When you reach this site, please click on “Health Topics”

A Tip Sheet for Parents – <https://e-cigarettes.surgeonge...>