



Holly Area Schools

Excellence in Action!

April 5, 2024

Dear Parents and Students of Holly Area Schools,

At Holly Area Schools, the health, safety and well-being of our students is our top priority. Today I'm providing the second in a series of communications focusing on the health of our students.

Today's message focuses on growing health concerns about use of nicotine and THC (active ingredient in cannabis) vaping devices by youth. Vaping continues to grow in popularity among young people, and students are often attracted by its enticing flavors, sleek device designs, and the false belief that it's "just water vapor."

In addition to posing **numerous health risks, consequences for using and/or distributing vape devices and THC products include violations of the student code of conduct subject to severe disciplinary actions** in accordance with our district's policies, including suspension and possible expulsion.

The long-term effects of vaping on the developing bodies and brains of adolescents are particularly concerning.

Recent [research from Johns Hopkins University](#) found users of vaping devices are exposed to potentially dangerous levels of metals like lead, nickel, manganese, and chromium, in addition to nicotine and other harmful chemicals. These metals are inhaled through vaping devices and can lead to serious health problems such as **respiratory distress, lung disease, cardiovascular disease, and neurological damage**.

An [American Heart Association](#) study found that vaping nicotine and THC is linked to increased reports of **depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts** among teens and young adults. In a survey of over 2,500 individuals ages 13-24, users of nicotine-only, THC-only, and both substances reported higher rates of anxiety and depression compared to non-vapers. Dual users, in particular, showed a significant likelihood of addiction to nicotine and a tendency to vape to alleviate depressive symptoms.

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Recent studies have also highlighted the alarming impact of high-potency cannabis products on the physical health, mental health and cognitive development of young people. With THC levels close to 100%, today's cannabis products are making some teenagers highly dependent and dangerously ill, including growing cases of **youth psychosis, addiction, chronic vomiting and more.**

As a district, we are increasing awareness and identifying educational initiatives to help inform our students about these and other dangers of vaping. The following resources provide helpful tools to combat vaping addiction:

Truth Initiative: (<https://truthinitiative.org/thisisquitting>)

- A free mobile program designed specifically for teens and young adults to quit vaping. Includes personalized support and advice through text messages tailored to the user's age and type of product they use.

National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens:(teens.drugabuse.gov)

- Offers a wealth of information on the dangers of vaping and tobacco, along with interactive tools and drug facts that can help teens understand the risks of vaping and how to seek help.

Smokefree Teen: (teen.smokefree.gov)

- Provides tools, tips, and resources designed to help teenagers understand the health risks of vaping and explore various methods and strategies to quit vaping.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

- A confidential and free 24/7, 365-days-a-year treatment referral and information service for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

I urge our parents to engage in open and honest conversations with your children about the risks associated with vaping. To our students, I strongly encourage you to think critically about the decisions you make and their long-term impact on your health and well-being.

Working together, we can help curb vaping in our schools and protect the health of our Bronchos. Our collective effort can make a significant difference in the lives of our students as they chart their individual journeys toward success, rewarding careers and bright futures.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Roper, Superintendent
Holly Area Schools