

September 25, 2017

Dear Parents/ Guardians:

We are concerned about the use of vape pens or e-cigarettes in the community and are writing to request your partnership in keeping these products out of our school. Ridgewood High School recently sent out a letter alerting its parents of the situation, and unfortunately, we are now starting to hear of students experimenting with these products.

Possession of a vape pen, e-cigarette, or any materials associated with them is strictly prohibited at school and is illegal. Please educate yourself on what these items look like, and discuss this issue with your student(s). Students can be tempted to try vaping if they believe it isn't as dangerous as cigarettes. Be sure to check your student's room and backpack regularly and limit the amount of money they carry with them. If we have a creditable report of a student vaping or possessing vaping materials, we will call parents and investigate thoroughly. If we find students in possession of vapes, we will report this to the Norridge police.

During recess meetings, we will be addressing vaping and why even pretending to vape is against school policy at school. Some students and parents have expressed concerns that they may be the victim of a student hiding their illegal items in the desks or backpacks of unsuspecting, innocent students. We have no evidence of this happening, and like the stories about students at Giles getting caught vaping, this is just a rumor at this time. If students ever see students vaping, or find anything in their backpack or desk that is not their own, they need to tell a teacher or me immediately. Bringing something forward and reporting it is not going to result in punishment.

We are dedicated to do everything we can to maintain a safe school environment. Students should be comfortable about coming to school and seeing students following the rules. Thank you for remaining vigilant about talking to your student(s) and checking their belongings for anything that is not their own possession.

**Below is an excerpt from the Ridgewood High School letter to their parents about vaping.**

“Vapes” or E-cigarettes are composed of a liquid cartridge, an atomizer, and a rechargeable battery. The liquid cartridge is the flavored part of the pen used to create the vapor; it is also the part of the pen that typically contains nicotine. The atomizer heats the pen when the user inhales and is charged by the battery. Here are some subtle signals that mean that your teenager might be secretly vaping:

1. ***Fruity aroma*** - E-cigarettes don't smell bad like the smoke from combusting tobacco, however, most e-liquids have flavors in them that usually smell nice like candy, mint, vanilla, fruit punch etc. If you catch a sudden whiff of any of these but none of them is around, consider this a red flag.
2. ***Unfamiliar handheld gadgets*** - E-cigarettes come in various shapes, from cig-a-likes to box mods. However, the most common ones resemble a pen and are known as vape pens. If you such a gadget, or a pen that isn't a pen, be aware that it could be a vaporizer. The easiest way to spot an e-cig is to look for holes on each end of the device.
3. ***Batteries and chargers*** - Just like you have to charge your smartphone every single day, vapers need to charge their vaporizers on a regular basis. While some e-cigs can

be charged with just a USB cable, most of the powerful e-cigs like box mods support 18650 batteries. So, if you see unfamiliar batteries on the charger, take a look around and you might find a vaping device.

4. *Metallic wires and cotton wicks* - If you find organic cotton, empty plastic vials or thin metallic coils lying in your child's room, this is yet another red flag.
5. *Discarded atomizers* - The atomizers are a vital part of e-cigs as they turn e-juice into vapor. However, they are disposable and after a while usually burn out. If you come across a discarded atomizer in your kid's trash can, it's a clear indication that he/she has been vaping.

If you have any further concerns about this or any other discipline issue, please call or email me.

Sincerely,  
Principal Stephanie Palmer  
Assistant Superintendent/Principal Norridge School District 80  
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