



Principal's Page



Vaping Epidemic

Timothy Jenny – High School Principal

As a great school, DCS regularly brings everyone together to support athletic contests, concerts, academic awards ceremonies, musicals, art shows, and many other exciting events. We are fortunate to have so many wonderful opportunities that bring students, staff, and the community together. There are times, however, when we need a united front to combat developments in society that are unsafe and unhealthy for our students.

As defined by Merriam-Webster, **VAPING**, is the act of “inhaling vapor through the mouth of a usually battery-operated electronic device (such as an electronic cigarette) that heats up and vaporizes a liquid or solid.” Vaping has become a serious epidemic in schools everywhere, including Dolgeville.

The FDA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated, “from 2017 to 2018, there was a 78 percent increase in current e-cigarette use among high school students and a 48 percent increase among middle school students. The total number of middle and high school students currently using e-cigarettes rose to 3.6 million — that’s 1.5 million more students using these products than the previous year.”

The trending choice for students vaping in school is called a JUUL. It resembles the size and shape of a USB drive and can easily be disguised or hidden. The tiny cartridge that stores the flavored oil in the device is called a pod. One pod contains the nicotine equivalent of an entire pack of cigarettes. The Center on Addiction reminds us that “Nicotine can disrupt brain development, contribute to future cardiovascular disease and increase the risk of a teen trying alcohol or other drugs. Nicotine itself is also a highly addictive drug, which explains why a significant proportion of teens who have never smoked a cigarette or who never intended to smoke a cigarette end up smoking after using e-cigarettes like JUULs. In addition to nicotine (which is found in all JUUL products), the liquids used for e-cigarettes also contain cancer-causing toxic chemicals, heavy metals and ultrafine particles that pose additional health risks.”

Originally developed to give adults an alternative to traditional tobacco cigarettes, vaping devices have enveloped our youth and are endangering their health and wellness. Students who would never dream of smoking cigarettes are vaping because “it’s cool”, because “everyone is doing it”, and because “it’s not bad for you like a cigarette is.” Worse yet, students who make the right choice not to engage in vaping can’t walk into a bathroom or into a locker room without potentially encountering other students who are.

At school, we are working hard stop vaping. Our drug and alcohol counselor through Catholic Charities will be scheduling a student information assembly soon and we hope to offer a parent and community information session that same evening. Teachers were recently given vaping information flyers to understand what vaping is, what to look for, and how to educate our students.

In addition to compromising their health and safety, students who choose to bring vapes to school earn in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension depending on the level of the infraction and the frequency, tarnishing their ability to be a leader, their character, their reputation, and their school record. If they participate in extra-curricular activities they lose the opportunity to participate in a percentage of their contests or events, letting down their teammates, coaches, teachers, and community members. As vaping devices are illegal for students to possess in school, the devices will be confiscated and destroyed. They will not be returned to the students or to their parents.

We have included a two page flyer attached to this article titled, *Vaping 101-What Every Parent Should Know*. Please take the time to learn about vaping and talk to your son or daughter about the serious health ramifications of doing so. Together we can work to help our students make healthy choices and put a stop to this dangerous vaping epidemic.

