



CRANBOURNE

Safeguarding

Newsletter

October 2025

Memes and Stoptober: Vaping

What are the risks?

Memes may look like simple jokes, but, for many teenagers, they form a shared cultural language. Quickly created and reworked, they spread across social media platforms as images with text or short videos. Nearly eight in ten teenagers share memes, making them part of daily life. While memes encourage creativity and participation, they can also spread misinformation or reinforce harmful stereotypes.



Spreading misinformation

While memes help to communicate complex topics, they can also spread misinformation. Memes may sometimes include content presenting false facts or biased viewpoints, especially around health, politics, or current events and, as they're designed to be shared quickly, young people may not question their accuracy.

Hidden harms and losing sensitivity

When serious topics like violence, racism or mental health are turned into jokes, children and young people may become less sensitive to these issues over time. While a funny meme may seem light hearted, it can carry messages that belittle certain groups, encourage risky behaviour or mock personal struggles. Repeated exposure through memes can make harmful behaviour seem normal or less important. Over time, this can blur their understanding of what is funny versus what is discriminatory, harmful or damaging to themselves and others.

Permanent digital footprint



Unlike spoken jokes, memes leave a trail. Created or shared memes can resurface later and be misunderstood, even if intended as harmless. Once online, memes may be copied, saved or spread beyond a young person's control - digital actions can follow them into their future, shaping how they are perceived by peers, teachers, or even employers long after the original meme has been shared.

Exposure to inappropriate content

Memes are widely circulated and not always age-appropriate, meaning young people may encounter explicit language, sexual content or graphic imagery even without searching for it. As memes spread fast on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, it's nearly impossible to filter them completely.



Masked messages

Some memes are designed to be confusing or layered with hidden meanings, making them hard for parents and other young people to understand. Online groups often create these memes to look like inside jokes, but they can sometimes conceal offensive, harmful or misleading content.

Advice for parents and educators



Encourage open conversations

Talk regularly with young people to try and understand their online world - discuss what they find funny about the memes and why. By listening without judgement, you build trust, making it easier for them to come to you if they see something harmful. Open conversations also help children and teens think critically about the messages behind memes rather than simply accepting them at face value.

Model healthy boundaries

Show young people positive online behaviours, such as taking breaks from screens, avoiding late night scrolling and engaging in offline activities. Setting clear routines around screen time at home can help to reinforce healthy boundaries and reduce the risks of overuse. By modelling balanced technology use, adults can help children and young people see that digital entertainment, including memes, should be just one part of life.

Teach digital literacy

Help children and young people learn to question where information comes from and whether it's reliable - developing media literacy skills prepares young people to understand and navigate through their future online lives. Show them how memes can sometimes exaggerate or misrepresent facts for laughs, and encourage them to check credible sources when memes claim to present truth.



Foster empathy online

Remind children and young people that memes should never come at someone else's expense. Encourage them to think about how a meme might make another person feel before sharing or creating it. Highlight examples of positive memes that celebrate creativity without hurting others. Fostering empathy, respect and kindness in digital spaces will help them become more aware of promoting a safer, more supportive online culture.

VAPES (E-CIGARETTES) PARENT/CARER FACT SHEET



WHAT ARE VAPES (E-CIGARETTES)?

Also known as e-liquids or puff bars, vapes are battery powered devices that heat a liquid to create vapours to be inhaled. The liquids often contain addictive nicotine, flavourings and other chemicals. Vapes come in many shapes, sizes, flavours and colours.



CURRENT ADVICE ON VAPING

Vapes should not be used by children or adults who do not currently smoke. People who currently smoke are encouraged to swap to vapes. Vapes are a quitting aid that reduces the harms of tobacco smoking.

Smoking carries far greater health risks than vaping. It is the biggest cause of illness and death in the UK. Tobacco smoke contains nicotine, tar, carbon monoxide, arsenic and many other toxic chemicals. However, vaping is not risk free.



RISKS OF VAPING IN CHILDREN

Vaping side-effects can include headaches, coughing, insomnia, worsening of asthma symptoms and throat irritation. As vapes are relatively new, the long-term health effects are still unknown. Children and non-smokers are therefore urged not to start vaping.

Vaping exposes children to nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive and has a negative effect on children's developing brains. Nicotine use by children could lead to mental health problems. This includes anxiety, poor concentration and future substance misuse or addictions.

VAPING BEHAVIOUR IN CHILDREN

Vaping has grown in popularity globally and in the UK. A recent UK survey by ASH (Action for Smoking and Health) found that 21% of 11-17 year olds had tried vaping and this is on the increase. Local school surveys also show a sharp rise with age, from year 7 to year 13. Whilst surveys show that most children don't vape, this is likely an underestimation. The main reasons that young people vape or have experimented with vaping include:

- Curiosity 'to give it a go'
- Peer pressure
- Appealing flavours and marketing
- Seeing family and friends vape or smoke

THE LAW AND VAPING

It is against the law to sell nicotine products to anyone under the age of 18. It is also illegal to buy vapes on behalf of anyone under 18.



Unsafe, illegal vapes which do not meet UK quality and safety standards have been on the rise. They can contain dangerous chemicals such as lead and nickel. High levels of inhaled lead damages children's central nervous system and brain development. Some illegal vapes contain nicotine but claim otherwise.

VAPING AND ENVIRONMENT



Disposable vapes generate lots of single use plastic, electrical waste and littering. They use a lot of water and generate greenhouse gas emissions in their manufacture. Unsafely throwing away disposable vapes could release plastic, electronic and hazardous chemical waste into the environment. This can also be a fire risk.

REPORTING ILLEGAL VAPES OR UNDERAGE SALES OF VAPES



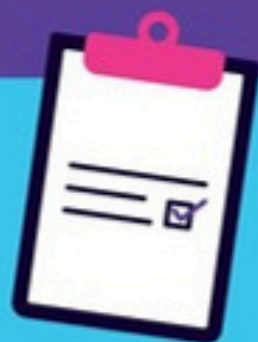
If you are aware of or suspect any illegal vapes/e-cigarettes, or underage vape sales, you can report anonymously to hants.gov.uk/tradingstandards

HOW TO DISPOSE OF VAPES/E-CIGARETTES



Do not place vapes in household waste as they can cause a serious fire risk. Your local vape shop or supermarket might have a collection bin. Single use and reusable e-cigarettes/vapes can also be taken to any of your local waste recycling centres in Hampshire: hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling

WHAT THE COUNTY COUNCIL IS DOING TO ADDRESS VAPING IN CHILDREN



To protect children, we are undertaking the following activities:

- Setting up smoking and vaping prevention programmes to support schools and teachers.
- Tackling illegal vapes and stopping underage sales through Hampshire Public Health and Trading Standards initiatives.
- Continuing to support people to stop smoking through our stop smoking service, **Smokefree Hampshire**.
- Working to raise awareness and encourage behaviour change to stop smoking and prevent vaping uptake by children and young people.

SUPPORT

If you are concerned that your child may already be addicted to nicotine, speak to your GP or to your child's school nurse by contacting **ChatHealth** – text **07507 332160**


HELP FOR PARENTS AND CARERS TO STOP SMOKING

If you smoke, it is never too late to quit. Visit **Smokefree Hampshire** or call **01264 563039** or **0800 772 3649**. You can also text 'Quit' to **66777**. Smokefree Hampshire provides tailored, free support that has been proven to help smokers quit. The service also supports the use of vaping as a quitting aid and can provide support to stop vaping too.

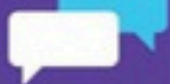
WHAT PARENTS AND CARERS CAN DO

You have an important role to play in preventing the harms of vaping in children. Here are some tips for a healthy discussion with your child:

- Know the facts, get credible information about vapes (see resource links below).
- Choose the right time and place: a more natural discussion will increase the likelihood that your child will listen, for example, seeing someone vaping.
- Ask questions, listen and learn from what they tell you, and answer their questions.
- Set clear expectations with them, share why you don't want them to vape.
- Be a healthy role model to your child, for example, if you use vapes yourself, don't vape in the house or car.
- If you smoke, you can get free personalised support to help you quit for good from **Smokefree Hampshire**.

 Search

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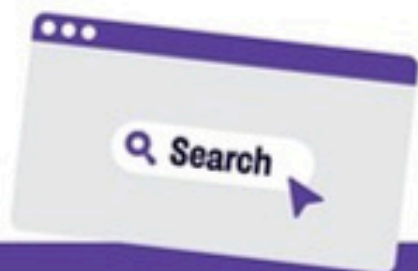
COMPLAINTS ABOUT INAPPROPRIATE ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION OF VAPES

Complaints about inappropriate advertising and promotion of vaping to under-18s, for example on social media, should be addressed to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) through the **online complaints portal**.



FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

You can find some useful information and local support services listed below:



ASH (Action on Smoking and Health):
ash.org.uk/resources/publications/fact-sheets

Talk to Frank:
talktofrank.com/drug/vapes

NHS
nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking/#young-people

Chief Medical Officer for England on vaping
gov.uk/government/speeches/chief-medical-officer-for-england-on-vaping

Smokefree Sheffield Vaping facts
smokefreesheffield.org/get-involved/campaigns/vaping-the-facts/

Smokefree Hampshire (stop smoking services)
smokefreehampshire.co.uk/

Hampshire Trading Standards (to report illegal vapes or underage vaping sales)
hants.gov.uk/business/tradingstandards/contact-us

Smokefree Me Hampshire resources about youth vaping
hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/smokefreeme/electronic-cigarettes

For support with any questions and advice relating to a wide range of health and wellbeing issues
hampshirehealthyfamilies.org.uk/chathealth or healthforteens.co.uk/

WE WILL LISTEN and WE CAN HELP



At Cranbourne every single staff member is responsible for safeguarding. All staff are here to promote the welfare of our students & protect them from harm.

All staff are trained to take the appropriate action and ensure that someone from the safeguarding team follows up to support you with specific assistance and guidance:



Mrs K Reddy
Lead DSL



Mrs K Gare
Deputy DSL



Miss S Conlon
Deputy DSL



Mrs C Ryan
Deputy DSL

We want you to talk to who you feel most comfortable; it could be your form tutor, your Head of House, someone from the DSL team or any other member of staff.



Mrs P Corrigan
Deputy DSL



Mrs C Millett
Deputy DSL



Miss R Alner
Head of House



Mrs T Simpson
Head of House



Mrs J Vaughan
Head of House



Miss S Miller
DDSL / HOH

childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

childline.org.uk | 0800 1111



Childline is here to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. You can talk about anything. Whether it is something big or small, Childline's trained counsellors are here to help you.



CEOP is a law enforcement agency that helps keep young people safe from sexual abuse & online grooming. You can make a report directly if you are worried about online sexual abuse or something that has happened online which has made you feel unsafe, scared or worried.

YOUNG MiNDS



Young Minds is the UK's leading charity fighting for children and young people's mental health. They want to see a world where no young person feels alone with their mental health and all young people get the mental health support they need, when they need it, no matter what.

www.youngminds.org.uk



Safe image of you online?
We can help take it down.



Report Remove is here to help young people under 18 in the UK to confidentially report sexual images & videos of themselves online & remove them from the internet.

It is against the law for anyone to share a sexual image or video of someone who is under 18; Report Remove is safe, easy and free.

THE MIX



The MIX is a UK based charity that provides free, confidential support for young people under 25 via online, social and mobile.

Whatever issue a young person is facing, The Mix is always there for them!

www.themix.org.uk

shout

85258



Shout is the UK's first and only free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope. To start a conversation, text the word 'SHOUT' to 85258. Their trained volunteers are there to listen at any time of day or night, & messages won't appear on the phone bill.