

18 March 2025

County Hall
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SubstanceUseTeam@Wiltshire.gov.uk

Contaminated Vapes and Health Risks

Dear Headteacher and DSL,

Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Police would like to make schools aware of the dangers of certain disposable vapes and liquids. Devices and liquids containing THC or synthetic cannabinoids often known as Spice have become more frequent across the region, leading to hospitalisation in some severe cases. We are writing to you today to provide some further information on these vapes, the dangers of the substances they may contain, and how to identify when a vape may contain illicit substances

Spice is a lab made drug which mimics the effect of cannabis, but with much stronger effects. It can cause serious side effects like breathing problems, heart attacks and seizures. Other symptoms include feeling dizzy, vomiting, heart racing, sweating, anxiety and paranoia. Vape liquid contaminated with spice is often a coloured liquid (red, green, blue, purple or pink). They can be of many different brands or be unlabelled. They are more likely to be a liquid added to a refillable vape rather than a disposable device.

THC stands for tetrahydrocannabinol, which is the main psychoactive compound found in cannabis (marijuana). It's responsible for the "high" that people experience when they consume marijuana. THC vapes are usually highly concentrated and potent, therefore have higher incidences of mental and physical health problems and may lead to a higher risk of developing acute adverse effects, such as paranoia, psychosis, and cannabis hyperemesis syndrome. Immediate effects include dizziness, vomiting, and general unwellness. THC vapes are often refillable, with a yellow resin or oil that has a typical cannabis smell. We are also aware of rechargeable vape pens, also with the thick yellow resin/oil that may contain THC.

Investigations remain ongoing as to the origin of where these vapes were purchased, the common issue across all cases has been the presence of illicit substances within vape devices/liquids.

We ask you to remain vigilant and take proactive measures to ensure the safety of your students. There is information accompanying this letter on the [Healthy Schools Wiltshire](#) website which will be helpful, including details of local services for young people. You may wish to adapt and use the information to communicate with parents, carers and/or students in your usual format (newsletter, app etc.). We would also encourage you to share this information with students in

assemblies or PSHE lessons. For support in delivering these sessions, you can find information on [The Wrap DHI website](#), or contact Connect Wiltshire for more specific support and group work.

If you have any reports or suspicions of similar incidents in your school or local area, please complete a [Local Drug Information System \(LDIS\) form](#) and promptly share the information with the Public Health team by emailing the completed form to SubstanceUseTeam@Wiltshire.gov.uk. We can support you to do this if you contact us at the email address at the top of this letter. Please ensure all staff are aware of the LDIS process which can be found [here](#).

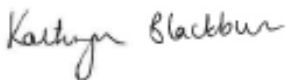
If you find a vape, which you suspect contains THC, spice, or any other adulterated substances being used or distributed in school, the police should be notified and any products seized should be stored so they can be sent for testing. The purpose of police testing these products is for public health intelligence and harm reduction and is not to be used as evidence for prosecution. Please contact the police by emailing vapetesting@wiltshire.police.uk.

If you have concerns about an individual using substances, you can refer them to Wiltshire's drug and alcohol support service, this can include use of THC, Spice and other adulterated vapes, please signpost to Connect. [Connect Wiltshire | Turning Point](#)

If you have students using nicotine only vapes, or smoking tobacco, please signpost them to the [Wiltshire Health Improvement Hub](#).

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Substance use team directly: SubstanceUseTeam@Wiltshire.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Blackburn, Director of Public Health, Wiltshire Council



Darryl Freeman, Director of Children and Education, Wiltshire Council