



Vaping Resource Guide for NL Schools



**NL Health
Services**



Schools play an important role in preventing tobacco and vape use by youth as they have a mandate to promote, create and maintain healthy school environments and foster healthy behaviours for life[1].

The purpose of this document is to provide tools and resources to school staff and others who are working to address the use of nicotine products among youth. Key audiences that can utilize the toolkit include principals, teachers, guidance counselors, and public health nurses.

School Health Promotion Liaison Consultants can assist with connecting you to resources, consultation with prevention and health promotion staff with Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services and staff training to address tobacco and vapour product use at your school.

[1] School Health NL. <https://twitter.com/SchoolHealthNL>

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Background

Vapour products, also referred to as vapes, e-cigarettes or electronic nicotine delivery devices (ENDS) emerged onto the Canadian market in 2009. Since 2017, new generations of small, cartridge or “pod” type devices and disposable devices entered the market creating a new rise in popularity. Promoted as discreet, compact, sleek and modern, these products have a high appeal to young people.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, e-cigarettes or vapes are regulated the same way that ‘regular’ cigarettes are sold in the province. Vapes are not to be used in enclosed public spaces, sold to anyone under the age of 19 and are to be kept in hidden displays in retail establishments. The majority of vapes sold in the province contain nicotine, which is a highly addictive substance, also found in cigarettes. Nicotine has a long-lasting harmful effect on the developing adolescent brain impacting attention, learning, mood and impulse control. Moreover, nicotine use is associated with an increased risk to developing addiction to other substances.

Although vapour products are promoted as a less harmful alternative for those who want to quit smoking, they are not harmless, particularly for youth and non-smokers. As vaping exposes people to nicotine, various chemical compounds, irritants and carcinogens, it may lead to respiratory irritation, nicotine toxicity, and pulmonary and cardiovascular disease. Recent evidence supports that even exposure to second-hand vapour aerosol can lead to respiratory issues for by-standers. Malfunctioning devices have also caused injuries like burns. Further, are concerns that vaping amongst youth may increase the chances of progressing to smoking, or to using both cigarettes and vapour products (dual use). The Canadian Paediatric Society cautions against using vaping as a smoking cessation or harm reduction strategy for youth, as there is evidence of harm while no reliable evidence of effectiveness for this age group exists.





Vaping and Youth

Statistics

Canada-wide surveys identified that 40% of students in NL in grades 7-12 have tried vaping compared to the national average of 29.4%; tobacco smoking rates among youth in grades 7-12 at an all-time low at 2.5%; and past 30-day use of vaping among youth in grades 7-12 in Newfoundland and Labrador was the highest in Canada at 26.6%^[2]. To learn more about the latest statistical information on youth vaping in Canada and NL, you can also consult:

- [Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey](#) | Health Canada
- [Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey \(CTNS\)](#) | Health Canada

[2] Health Canada. (January 2024) Summary of results for the Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey. Retrieved at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canadian-student-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/2021-2022-summary.html>

Schools and Vaping Prevention

Best Practice for Schools

Addressing student use of vapour products requires a multi-pronged approach in alignment with the Comprehensive School Health Framework and evidence-based substance-related harms prevention. Learn more about how schools can do that through the Public Health Agency of Canada's Blueprint for Action: Preventing substance-related harms among youth through a Comprehensive School Health approach and this brief summary. The general recommendations that follows are aligned with this resource and other substance use and vaping specific evidence-based prevention resources, however educators are encouraged to analyse their school communities' particular needs for a tailored approach. Your regional School Health Promotion Liaison Consultant can connect you to resources to support this work.

The Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH) has developed a resource for schools to help address this growing issue from a Comprehensive School Health Perspective. Download a copy [here](#).



Here's what you can do:

1. Address Student Vapour Use

- ✓ Create and review and strengthen existing smoke and vapour free policies and code of conduct. Make sure they meet or exceed the provincial legislation. Ensure your school follows best practices for substance-related harms prevention and treat tobacco and vapour products the same as all other substances (drugs and alcohol). You can find some policy examples here.
- ✓ Utilize the Blueprint for Action - a resource providing guidance to help inform comprehensive and concrete action plans and strategies at various levels of the Canadian education system to prevent substance-related harms among youth which intends to: a resource providing guidance to help inform comprehensive and concrete action plans and strategies at various levels of the Canadian education system to prevent substance-related harms among youth which intends to:
 - Encourage a different way of thinking about how to approach youth substance use: say yes to evidence and no to one-size-fits-all interventions.
 - Support school stakeholders to engage their networks: increase attention, buy-in and resources for long-term approaches.
- ✓ Favour educational and supportive approaches rather than punitive ones, for example implementing an alternative to suspension program.
- ✓ Address vaping in the school following the Safe & Caring Schools Policy.
- ✓ Respect the traditional use of tobacco by promoting education about the sacred nature of tobacco to some indigenous communities. You can find some policy examples here.
- ✓ Substance use prevention starts with things unrelated to substances. Foster a school environment that is welcoming and promotes well-being.
- ✓ The school climate can have a profound impact on students' well-being and risk of problematic substance use.

- ☑ A positive school climate actively promotes healthy behaviours and social interactions. It exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, respected and accepted. The school climate is dynamic and shaped in large part by the people, policies, practices and programs within the school community.
- ☑ In addition to contributing to the school climate, these elements of school communities can be bolstered to prevent problematic substance use by enhancing important protective factors (e.g., self-efficacy, social connectedness, school engagement and healthy relationships with supportive adults) among students. Many of these protective factors also reflect important resources that support well-being. Positive school climates are also associated with healthy social norms related to substance use (i.e., which neither stigmatizes nor glamourizes substance use).
- ☑ Engage students and recruit student voices to create effective policies, programs and a positive environment. Youth engagement recognizes young person's right to participate in decisions that impact them and acknowledges the great skills and strengths they bring to the table. It injects young people as valued stakeholders into creating effective and inclusive policies, programs, and environments.

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- ④ Stress and mental health problems are associated the use of substances. Aim to promote mental health and build social-emotional and executive functioning skills to empower students to better manage challenges and reduce the harms from vaping. Learn more about [Mental Health Promotion in schools](#) and [Effective Programming for positive youth development](#). Check out the [Joint Consortium for School Health Positive Mental Health Toolkit](#).
- ④ Ensure students are aware of the policies by providing regular reminders.
- ④ Ensure smoke-free signs are visible on school property and that signage includes vaping. Add signage in areas where students congregate. Check if your local municipality has a smoke-free bylaw and if it specifies any requirements for schools.
- ④ Designate staff to conduct regular walkabouts to maintain a visible presence and increase awareness and compliance.
- ④ Make information about quitting support available to all students.



2. Inform Staff

- ④ Provide training and reminders about the school policy on tobacco and vapour products so that everyone knows the rules and their roles. The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District has a Cannabis and Smoke Free Policy.
- ④ Help teachers stay informed about vaping. Share the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco's Educator resources with your staff.
- ④ Reduce stigma and help teachers promote open and non-judgemental dialogue in the classroom about tobacco, vaping and other substances. The teacher remains neutral, trustworthy and a good listener, and allows the community of inquiry to direct the discussion. In such inquiry, everyone is a member of the dialogue.
- ④ Creating a safe environment in schools for kids to talk about vaping is paramount in addressing this growing public health concern. By fostering an atmosphere of open communication and trust, students feel safe and empowered to share their experiences, concerns, and questions regarding vaping without fear of judgment or repercussion. This safe space allows teachers and administrators to provide accurate information about the risks and consequences of vaping, equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed decisions, and offer support to those who may be struggling with addiction. Ultimately, by encouraging dialogue and education in a safe environment, schools play a crucial role in preventing vaping-related harm and promoting the well-being of students.



3. Educate Parents

- ✓ Send an annual (or more regular) newsletter/memo/email home that explains your school's policy and student expectations, such as this memo from the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco on Nicotine Pouches.
- ✓ Parents/guardians play an important role in talking with their children. Share The Alliance for the Control of Tobacco's 'Truth About Vaping' Parent Resources and Health Canada information and resources on your website and through your communication channels with parents.
- ✓ Work with community partners to host a public awareness event on vaping. Grants might be available to support health-promoting initiatives. Check out your Regional Wellness Coalitions to learn of their grant programs and discretionary funding that may be able to support such an activity.

4. Support Cessation



Nicotine is addictive and it can be hard to stop. Some students may not be ready to quit but could still benefit from support to reduce the harms of smoking or vaping. Vaping for cessation or harm reduction from smoking is not recommended for this age group. Having a non-judgemental approach, maintaining a positive relationship, focusing on the person and not on their behavior and meeting them where they are at in their readiness to change, are helpful in supporting students who are impacted by substance use.

- ✓ Inform students and staff about free support through [QuitNow](#), [Quash App](#), and [I Quit For Me](#). I Quit For Me also has a [facilitator's guide](#) that can be used by anyone that wants to support youth aged 14-18 to quit smoking and vaping.
- ✓ The [Smokers' Helpline NL](#) (1-800-363-5864) has many resources available to help youth with smoking/vaping cessation. Support can be provided through text messages, e-support, over-the-phone, online group program, Mindful-eQuit or the KickAsh web app.
- ✓ Connect with community partners such as the [Alliance for the Control of Tobacco \(ACT\)](#) and your local community mental health and addictions office to inquire about local services and supports for youth. 811 can connect you to local mental health and addictions services in your area.
- ✓ Bridge the gap has a service directory for youth where they can find local supports. Click [here](#) to access the directory.
- ✓ [Doorways](#) provides rapid access to mental health and addictions counselling services 'one session at a time'.

Information for Teachers and Health Educators

Here's what you can do:

1. Educate Yourself

- ✔ Visit the Alliance for The Control of Tobacco's [Truth About Vaping](#) website. Here you will find resources for teachers including FAQs, a presentation with corresponding lesson plan and interactive classroom-based games.
- ✔ Other organizations have developed great resources for educators. Check out [BC Lung Vaping Handout for Teachers](#), and [Health Canada Talking with teens about vaping: Tip sheet](#).
- ✔ For a short introduction about vaping, watch this [video](#) from the UCLA School of Medicine.
- ✔ The use of nicotine products should be treated like other substances. Learn more about [substance use](#) and [how schools can help protect youth from substance-related harms](#).
- ✔ Improve your [dialogue facilitation](#) skills to encourage reflection and support the development of decision-making skills through open classroom discussions.
- ✔ [Health Canada](#) provides comprehensive information and resources about youth and vaping.
- ✔ Learn about the traditional and ceremonial use of tobacco through [Respecting Tobacco by FNHA](#).
- ✔ Consult the [Tobacco & Vaping Resources for Schools](#) for more information, lesson plans and resources for educators and youth.
- ✔ Drug Education Centered on Youth Decision Empowerment (DECYDE) Substance Use Snapshots for [Inhaled Nicotine](#) and [Cannabis Vaping](#).

Information for Teachers and Health Educators

2. Educate Students

- ✓ Visit the Alliance for The Control of Tobacco's Truth About Vaping website. Here youth can find information about vaping including myths vs. facts, videos and links to other youth resources. Teachers can also access Educational Resources for specific grades.
- ✓ Classroom resources and presentations are available through the BC Lung Foundation, Stanford Medicine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Scholastic and CATCH MY BREATH (has a cost associated).
- ✓ Health Canada has a national awareness campaign called Consider the Consequences which provides information on vaping and youth.
- ✓ Heart and Stroke offers Heartsmart Kids Printable Activities for Grades K-6 and 7+.
- ✓ Youth Now has a compilation of educator resources including materials from Scholastic.
- ✓ The WHO has developed a Tobacco Exposed Kahoot game for classroom use.
- ✓ Media Smarts can facilitate the inclusion of tobacco and vaping information in media literacy teachings .
- Explore the differences between commercial tobacco and vaping and the
- ✓ Traditional and Ceremonial Use of Tobacco through FNHA resources.
- Increase awareness of the impacts of tobacco and vaping on the environment and climate change using information from the WHO, Truth Initiative, UC Davis, and UNDO.
- ✓ Encourage students to get involved in advocacy with the Lung Health Foundation - Get involved Modules.
- ✓ Share trusted resources where they can learn about and access support for their mental health, substance use and tobacco and vaping, such as Bridge the Gapp, Quit Now, Quash and Smokers' Helpline NL.
- ✓ Community partners may offer grants for educational activities that relate to tobacco and vaping. Funding and programs sponsored by the tobacco and vaping industry; however, are not recommended and here is why.

Vape-Free School Checklist

The NL Smoke Free Environment ACT (2005), prohibits tobacco and vapour product use inside school buildings.

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District Cannabis and Smoke Free Policy, prohibits cannabis, tobacco and vaping product use in and on school grounds. Read the Policy Statement for more details.

This checklist of recommended strategies may reduce vaping at your school or district.

How many of the strategies below has your school implemented?

Update and share school policies and code of conduct.	
Ensure smoke and vape-free signage is prominent inside and outside the school.	
Identify vaping locations and problem areas on or in school grounds.	
Ensure student/classroom vaping resources are available.	
Ensure Parent/Guardian resources are available.	
Ensure resources are available for staff training and vaping awareness/prevention.	
Explore grant opportunities for vaping awareness/prevention projects.	
Host an awareness event about vaping for parents/students/community.	
Ensure information about quitting vaping is available to teachers, staff and students.	

Appendix 1 – Policy Review Checklist

Policy Review Considerations	Yes/No
Meets minimum provincial standard – Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act.	
Your school follows best practices for substance-related harms prevention and treats all substances in the same manner: alcohol, tobacco, vaping, cannabis, and other drugs.	
Definition of smoking and vaping includes: to inhale, exhale, burn, or carry a lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, hookah, activated electronic cigarette or other lighted or heated smoking equipment that burns or vaporizes tobacco, e-substances or cannabis.	
Creates smoke and vapour free areas specified by signage: entrances, washrooms, school property, and other identified areas.	
Prohibits vaping on school grounds, vehicles, school-related events and field trips.	
Establishes preventative actions, evidence-based education and supportive measures for youth that uses tobacco and vapour products. OR: Uses a Comprehensive School Health Approach to address vaping.	
Clearly states educational, supportive and restorative measures and avoid using punitive disciplinary actions for non-compliance.	

Additional Resources

- Model Smoking and Vaping Policy for Canadian School Districts – Action on Smoking and Health 2020

Appendix 2 – Signage and Print Resources

Signage		
No Smoking/No Vaping sign example		Credit: Free Printable Signs: <u>Click here to download a printable copy</u>
BC Lung Foundation: Infographics, FAQs, information sheets		Free download at: <u>General Youth Health Education Resources: Vaping BC Lung Foundation</u>
We're Free Tobacco Free (GOV+ ACT Poster)		<u>https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/healthyliving-pdf-act-school-banners.pdf</u>

Infographic – Vaping – The Mechanics Health Canada



<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/publications/healthy-living/vaping-mechanics-infographic.html>

Infographic – Tobacco Behind the Smoke Health Canada



<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/tobacco-behind-smoke-infographic.html>

Consider the Consequences: Vaping mirror clings and posters



To order visit:
**Resources –
Consider the
Consequences**

Talking with Teens about Vaping: A tip Sheet for Teachers Health Canada



<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/talking-teens-vaping-tip-sheet.html>

**The Long Term
Effects of Vaping
are Unknown:
Poster
Health Canada**



<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/long-term-health-impacts-vaping-unknown-poster.html>

**Vaping Nicotine
can Alter Teen
Brain Development
- Poster**



<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/vaping-nicotine-alter-teen-brain-development-poster.html>

**I Quit for Me
resources guides**



**Free to download
and print. (Youth
aged 14-18) Quit
smoking and
vaping booklet**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/i-quit-for-me-guide-youth.html>