



MacIntyre Academies  
Discovery Academy

Putting children and families *first*

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022

Dear Families,

We have seen an increase in children and young people bringing e-cigarettes or vapes into school and attempting to use them onsite. Young people vaping is not exclusive to our school with reports suggesting that it is significantly rising nationally. ASH - *Action on Smoking in School* have recently published the following information:

Latest data shows the proportion of children vaping is rising, up from 4% in 2020 to 7% in 2022, alongside the growing popularity of disposable vapes. The number of children who admit to ever trying vaping has risen from 14% in 2020 to 16% in 2022. However, the vast majority of under 18s who have never smoked, have also never vaped, and only 1.9% have vaped more frequently than once or twice.

The health risks of vaping have not been fully explored and are not conclusive however, there have been recent links to serious illness and life-threatening diseases. Vaping is not for children and links have been made between the possession of e-cigarettes/vapes and exploitation of vulnerable children as is the case with other age restricted products such as tobacco and alcohol. Therefore, we take possession and use of e-cigarettes/vapes extremely seriously and have a zero-tolerance policy.

If we suspect a child or young person to have an e-cigarette or vaping paraphernalia, we may need to use our powers of search to locate and remove the item(s). Below is the guidance published by the Department for Education in relation to screening, searches and confiscation in educational settings.

### Searches

Headteachers and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item. Prohibited items are:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers including vapes\*
- fireworks
- smart/mobile phones
- any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used: to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil).

*\*Headteachers and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.*

Vernons Lane, Nuneaton, CV11 5SS 024 7710 3370

discovery.office@macintyreacademies.org www.thediscoveryacademy.org





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### Confiscation

School staff can seize any prohibited item found as a result of a search. They can also seize any item, they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline.

### Searching Protocols

Your child will be welcomed in through the reception entrance. There they will be asked to empty their pockets and bags including any areas in which prohibited items could be concealed. If your child fails to comply with the searches, they will be prohibited from entering the main school building until we have been able to verify that no prohibited items are on their person.

Searching children is not a comfortable part of our job nor is it a pleasant experience for children and young people. We trust that you will support the school with this important health issue by discussing the use of such items with child. If you suspect that they may be in possession of an e-cigarette or that they are vaping, please discourage them from bringing them in to school due to the significant risk posed to all on site.

Should you have any concerns about the planned searches, please contact the school using the following:

Email: [discovery.office@macintyreacademies.org](mailto:discovery.office@macintyreacademies.org) or  
Telephone: 024 7710 3370

Yours sincerely

Tony Leigh  
Head of School

Vernons Lane, Nuneaton, CV11 5SS 024 7710 3370

[discovery.office@macintyreacademies.org](mailto:discovery.office@macintyreacademies.org) [www.thediscoveryacademy.org](http://www.thediscoveryacademy.org)

