



RICHARDSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Where all students connect, learn, grow and succeed

Vaping Awareness FAQs

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What is Vaping?

Vaping is the act of inhaling a substance, mixed with water vapor, into the lungs through an e-cigarette device. Substances typically contain substantial amounts of nicotine mixed with a flavoring in a cartridge. Other substances are also often inhaled through vaping, including illegal substances such as THC. THC is considered an illegal drug under Texas law, and possession of THC at school can result in a felony drug arrest by police.

Why is RISD raising awareness about vaping among students and parents?

RISD is working to raise awareness about vaping for two primary reasons - health risks and the legal consequences for students under Texas law.

Most vapes contain substances that are harmful, addictive, or both. Many vapes contain high levels of nicotine, and flavors can contain heavy metals that are introduced directly into a child's lungs. Ingredients in vapes are not currently regulated. A typical vape contains as much addictive nicotine as an entire pack of traditional cigarettes. As vaping has become much more popular among adults, children are following suit, and health authorities are reporting more health issues related to vaping.

Possession of a vaping or e-cigarette device by students is prohibited in RISD schools and at RISD events. The disciplinary consequence for possessing a vaping device is confiscation and a three day suspension.

However, under Texas law, if the illegal drug THC is found in a vape, it can dramatically escalate the legal and disciplinary consequences of possessing that illegal drug at school. Police will test the contents of confiscated vaping devices, and if THC is found, the student faces a felony arrest. Under state law, Dallas and Richardson police have arrested students who violate this law. An expulsion of up to 90 days can follow as a disciplinary consequence in RISD when a student is arrested for a felony.

As the number of felony arrests related to vaping rose last year, RISD is evaluating other disciplinary options that can serve as a deterrent but still keep students in the district and back in the classroom more quickly.

Isn't a felony arrest and expulsion harsh?

Both are very serious consequences. State law is clear that a student possessing the illegal drug THC in a vape faces a felony arrest.

Any student arrested by Richardson or Dallas police for a felony can face expulsion as a standard disciplinary consequence. Expulsion has been a direct function of a student being arrested for a felony, which is the clear offense under state law for possessing or selling an illegal drug at school. An expulsion is a harsh consequence and it's the opposite of what we want for RISD students.

The health and legal consequences are the primary reasons that RISD wants students to understand the position they are putting themselves in when they violate Texas law by possessing an illegal drug at school. RISD's goal is for no student to face suspension nor expulsion for vaping.

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What can students do?

Simply, understand that vaping can be harmful to your body, and the nicotine in vapes can make permanent changes to your brain. Also, understand that being caught with a vaping device can result in a suspension, and if the device contains THC, under state law you can be arrested for a felony and face suspension or expulsion from school. It's much wiser and easier to simply not vape.

What can parents do?

Understand what your child is doing. Learn to recognize what e-cigarettes and vaping devices look like. Your child looks to you as a role model. If you vape as a parent and adult, you may not realize that might encourage your child to vape. Take the time to understand the health, disciplinary and legal consequences that your child faces for being in possession of vaping devices at school.

Where can students and parents learn more?

<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/>

<https://drugfree.org/drug/e-cigarettes-vaping/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nu3OzPpL3AE&t=3s>

<https://www.cnn.com/videos/health/2018/04/06/high-school-students-vaping-e-cigarettes-gupta-orig.cnn>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/schools-respond-rise-student-vaping>

<https://recoverycouncil.org/>