



March 2023

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Dear Parents/Guardians

West Midlands Police and Solihull Local Authority have asked us to share some important information/guidance with you.

Cannabis Edibles and Vapes – from West Midlands Police

West Midlands Police (WMP) and schools in the borough are committed to working together to protect our young people from becoming victims of crime and exploitation. This information highlights the impact and dangers of cannabis edibles and vapes.

Officers have seen a recent trend in young people eating cannabis edibles, with some youths becoming ill after ingesting them. These products are often packaged to look like regular sweets and come in different forms such as gummies, sweets, chocolates, and other sundries. Some of them are imported in from the US, though others are from here in the UK. Those from the US contain THC (the main psychoactive component of cannabis) which is illegal in the UK and sometimes substituted with synthetic cannabinoids rather than THC, often without the consumer knowing it. These should not be consumed by young people or adults, despite saying how much THC there are alleged to have or claiming they are for over 18's.

Though synthetic cannabinoids can have comparable effects to cannabis, they can cause paranoia, hallucinations, panic attacks, impaired motor ability and in extreme cases even death. Given how cannabis edibles are marketed and look like regular sweets, it is easy to accidentally take a larger dose than intended; additionally, if they contain synthetic cannabinoids this increases the risk. Even those that contain THC lead to the difficulty of establishing how much is in there, as it is often unknown or not measured correctly in these food products. If the user has other medications in their system, their body may metabolize different amounts of THC, causing THC levels in the bloodstream to dangerously increase.

The difference between smoking cannabis and consuming edibles, is that it only takes minutes to feel the effects, compared to cannabis edibles which may take 1-3 hours, as food is absorbed into the bloodstream through the liver. Users end up consuming larger amounts of the drug while thinking the drug "isn't working."

Take a reasonable and balanced approach when talking about cannabis edibles, vapes and other drugs with your child. If they see that you are educated about the topic, they are more likely to make an informed decision on not taking them. If they see that you have a knowledgeable view of the risks, they'll be more likely to listen to you (see attached leaflet).

Vapes/Vaping

We would like to remind parents/carers that it is illegal for them to buy or provide vaping products to someone under the age of 18. Though vaping is a lot less harmful than smoking, it doesn't mean it's harmless. Schools will confiscate any vapes and related products brought in by pupils.



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What to do if you are concerned?

You can contact West Midlands Police either on the emergency line by dialling 999, non-emergency on 101 or via webchat at <https://west-midlands.police.uk/contact-us/live-chat>. We understand that not everyone will feel comfortable speaking to the police and if that is the case, please speak to your child's school. Every school has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who is responsible for working with the local authority who will respond accordingly. The following websites provide are beneficial for both parents/carers and young people:

- [SIAS - Supporting recovery | Reducing harm | Rebuilding lives \(sias-solihull.org.uk\)](https://sias-solihull.org.uk)
- [Honest information about drugs | FRANK \(talktofrank.com\)](https://talktofrank.com)
- [Childline | Childline](https://childline.gov.uk)
- [The Mix - Essential support for under 25s](https://www.themix.org.uk)

If you wish to know more about police work within your community, please consider signing up to West Midlands Police free messaging service: <https://www.wmnow.co.uk/>.

Safer Internet – from Solihull LA

Here is a link to the UK Safer Internet Centre - <https://saferinternet.org.uk/> where you will find information and guidance relating to helping children and young people stay safe online.

E-scooters and the Law – from Solihull LA

Please see the **attached leaflet** for details about e-scooters and the law.

Kind regards

Mr Hooper

Deputy Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead