



Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) is concerned about youth using of cannabis and vaping products with e-liquid nicotine. Children and youth are vulnerable to the negative health effects, including addiction. Nicotine and cannabis are known to alter brain development and can affect memory and concentration.

OPH has developed a multi prong approach to prevent the initiation and use of vaping products and cannabis among youth, to inform users of the potential health harms, and protect others from the second-hand effects. Some of the activities include

- Preparing and distributing fact sheets to parents and posting information on the [Parenting in Ottawa](#) website.
- Hosting discussions on the Parenting in Ottawa Facebook Page to generate meaningful discussion on vaping and cannabis with parents.
- Providing in-class presentations to students, hosting school wide assemblies and interactive displays to increase knowledge of the health risks and build decision making skills.
- Distributing OPH's resources for school administrators and teachers that discusses the myths and facts of vaping and cannabis.
- Continuing to engage youth, parents, teachers and others working with youth to develop resources and programs to increase knowledge; and build critical thinking and refusal skills.
- Working with school boards, school administrators and By-law and Regulatory Services to ensure compliance under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act (SFOA) that prohibits the use of vaping products and smoking cannabis anywhere on school property.
- A Public Health Nurse (PHN) is assigned to each publicly-funded school in Ottawa. The PHN is available to work with students, parents and school staff to determine the best ways to address vaping and cannabis in a school community.

The teen years are a time when your child may try using a vapour product and/or cannabis. Help them reflect on why they are using and turn it in to a learning opportunity. For instance:

- **Be prepared.** Make sure you have the facts about cannabis and vaping and plan a few points you want to share including setting expectations.
- **Start the conversation.** Take advantage of opportunities such as taking a walk with your teen or using a recent news story. Talk to them about it and then listen to what they say.
- **Reach out for help.** Visit ParentingInOttawa.ca/vaping or connect with a Public Health Nurse or parents on Facebook at Facebook.com/ParentingInOttawa. You can also speak with a Public Health Nurse by calling 613-PARENTS (613-727-3687) Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or emailing ParentingInOttawa@ottawa.ca.