



Let's clear the air

Information for schools, whānau and youth service providers about being smokefree and vapefree



This resource provides information on youth vaping and ways to support the vape-free and smoke-free kaupapa in schools. It was initially developed by Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora | Nelson Marlborough for school staff, youth workers, whānau and students. It includes content from Health Promotion, Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora alongside partner agencies across Aotearoa New Zealand.

As youth vaping is an evolving issue, we encourage you to seek information from reputable Aotearoa New Zealand and international websites when including consideration of vaping in your teaching and learning programme.

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The current landscape: vaping and rangatahi

The ASH Year 10 Snapshot Survey 2023

The ASH Year 10 Snapshot provides an annual cross-sectional census of 14 and 15-year-old school students' smoking and vaping behaviours and attitudes. All schools in Aotearoa New Zealand with Year 10 classes are invited to participate in the survey. Around 30,000 Year 10 students participate each year.

ASH began monitoring youth e-cigarette/vape use from 2014. Its trend data covers the same period, where adult smoking has continued to decline and e-cigarette/vape use increased. The only exception is 2020 when the survey was suspended due to COVID-19.

In 2021, in response to a rapidly changing regulatory environment and increased public profile of teen vaping concerns, ASH expanded the questions on e-cigarette/vape use even further, giving them similar emphasis as smoking. Questions on e-cigarette/vape use have been sourced from international survey examples and with

the input of the New Zealand Youth Tobacco Monitor Scientific Advisory Group. ASH has used both the terms "e-cigarette" and "vape" in relevant questions.

Smoking 2022 and 2023 comparisons

- The daily smoking rate remains low (1.2%).
- There were no significant changes in daily smoking rates by ethnicity or by ethnicity and gender.
- There were no statistically significant changes in regular smoking by ethnicity or by ethnicity and gender.
- Regular smoking was highest for Māori students at 6.2%, followed by Pacific (3.7%), European/Pākehā (2.0%) and Asian (1.0%) students.
- Never smoking rates showed a significant increase (85.8% to 87.8%), the highest never smoking prevalence in the history of the survey.
- Māori students showed a significant increase in never smoking (73.8% to 77.7%), in particular for Māori girls (71.0% to 76.8%).



Vaping 2022 and 2023 comparisons

- There has been no change in daily vaping, which remains stable at 10.0%.
- Regular vaping significantly decreased for the second consecutive year (18.2% in 2022 to 16.4% in 2023).
- European/Pākehā students showed significant decreases in regular vaping (15.7% to 13.9%) and ever tried vaping (37.6% to 35.5%).
- Regular vaping was highest for Māori students (32.0%), followed by Pacific (22.5%), European/Pākehā (13.9%) and Asian (4.5%) students.
- Ever tried vaping significantly decreased (40.1% to 37.5%) for the second consecutive year.
- There was a significant decrease in regular vaping for non-Māori non-Pacific boys (11.1 to 9.2%) and girls (15.3% to 13.6%).
- There was a significant decrease in ever tried vaping for non-Māori non-Pacific boys (31.7% to 28.6%) and girls (34.3% to 32.1%).
- Māori boys showed a significant decrease in ever tried vaping (56.4% to 52.6%).
- There was a significant decrease in regular vaping among students who have never smoked (10.3% to 9.5%).
- There was no significant change in daily vaping prevalence for students who have never smoked (4.6% in 2023).



Key messages

- The best thing you can do for your health is to be smokefree and vape-free.
- Vaping can help some people quit smoking.
- Vaping is not for children, young people or people who don't smoke.
- For people who smoke, vaping is less harmful but not harmless.
- Some vapes contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance. It can be very hard to stop vaping once you've become addicted to nicotine.
- Schools can help empower students to make informed decisions by providing facts.
- Young people who have questions about smoking or vaping can discuss them with their school nurse or doctor.



Supporting students and school staff

Give students the legal facts

Ensure that students are aware of your school's policy, rules, and procedures regarding smoking, vaping and other prohibited substances.

Reinforce the law. Students should know that it is illegal to sell or give a vaping product to someone under 18 and that it is prohibited to vape on school property or grounds 24/7.

Give students the health facts

In Aotearoa New Zealand, vaping is only recommended as a way to quit smoking. Vaping is not harmless and it is not for young people. Educate students on vaping just as you would with other programmes that focus on reducing harm from the use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.

Have discussions about the importance of what we don't know about possible health risks. Vaping may contain chemicals and

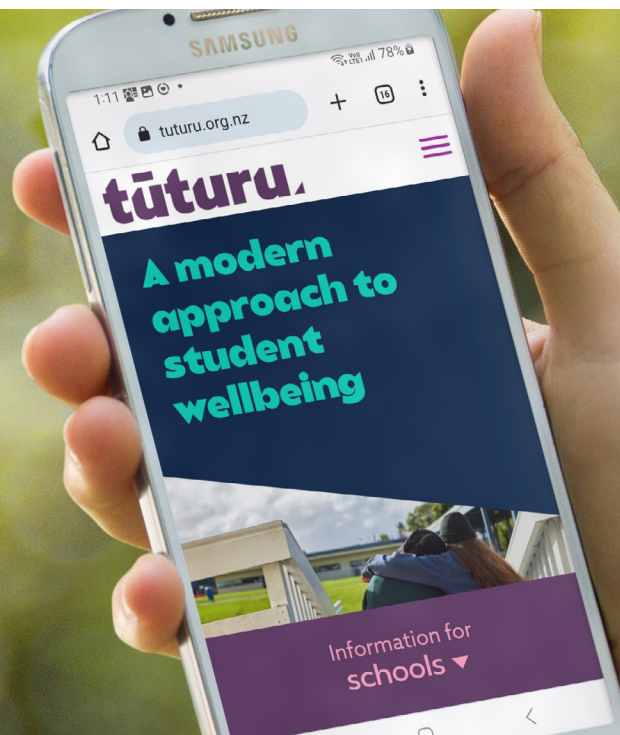
flavours where the long-term effects are unknown. Breathing in anything can have side effects.

Discuss how some vapes contain nicotine, which can affect young people's learning and behaviour. Nicotine is highly addictive. Vaping can help people who are trying to quit smoking to get nicotine with fewer toxins than cigarette smoke. Vaping is less harmful than smoking, but it's not harmless.

Help them use the facts

Conversations that empower students to come to their own conclusions help them feel respected and in control. Research together, ask questions and listen to their answers.

Tūturu is a whole-of-school approach to student wellbeing that prepares students for a world where alcohol and other drugs exist. It is evidence-based and uses approaches that improve wellbeing, develop critical thinking, and reduce harms from alcohol and other drugs. Learn more about Tūturu at www.tuturu.org.nz



Use reputable sources

Use these teaching resources and activities for vaping education at junior and senior secondary school levels: *Thinking critically about the marketing of energy drinks and/or vaping products.*

Support to quit

Provide support for students who are wanting to quit vaping or are vaping to quit smoking. You can also encourage students to get advice from a health professional such as a doctor or public health nurse.

Support for staff

Ensure staff are aware of the key messages:

- The best thing you can do for your health is to be smokefree and vape-free.
- Vaping can help some people quit smoking.
- Vaping is not for children, young people or people who don't smoke.
- For people who smoke, vaping is less

harmful but not harmless.

- Some vapes contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance. It can be very hard to stop vaping once you've become addicted to nicotine.
- Schools can help empower students to make informed decisions by providing facts.
- Young people who have questions about smoking or vaping can discuss them with their school nurse or doctor.

Hold a staff learning and discussion session and have them complete the Vaping Facts quiz, *Take the quiz | Vaping Facts.* Copy the questions as a handout so staff can record their answers to check their baseline knowledge.

Have staff go through the quiz again using the online version to see the answers and explanations. Hopefully following their learning and discussion session, their knowledge about vaping is improved.



Support and tips for parents

Know the facts

Vaping Facts has information about vaping, and relevant research about vaping and smoking in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Have honest conversations

Be open if you are asked about vaping or want to start talking to your child about it. These conversations should be treated as learning opportunities. Make efforts to:

- understand what your child thinks or feels about this topic
- learn what they know and do not know
- avoid being judgemental
- clear up any misconceptions they may have
- talk about the challenges around a young person's life such as a need for belonging, curiosity or stress
- talk about the effective ways to respond if they feel pressured to try vaping.

Ask open questions and let them express themselves. Encourage them to figure things out so you can learn what you can do to help them.

Useful resources

- *Conversation planner*, by the New Zealand Drug Foundation
- *Useful questions to ask sad/worried/mad kids and teens*, by Developing Minds, which you can adjust according to the situation and the age of the child
- *Vaping and Young People*, by KidsHealth

Let them know your expectations

Share why you don't want your child to vape. Talk about the risks, and also the negative impacts of nicotine addiction on their future, health and relationships. People who do not smoke should not start vaping, and vaping is not for young people.

It's good to understand the risks but also the reasons why a person might vape. If your child is vaping, you can discuss options for dealing with what motivated them to try it.

Education on vaping

Schools can plan an educational response to the issue of vaping. This includes lessons that engage students in thinking critically about:

- the deliberate design and marketing of many vaping products to young people
- why vapes have been promoted as lifestyle products rather than the quit smoking tools they were originally meant to be
- the challenges and strategies for resisting use and reducing harms from the use of vaping products.

Vaping products contain nicotine, so teaching can focus on harm reduction from substance use. Teachers are encouraged to talk about vaping products with the same sorts of activities that are used for learning about alcohol and other drugs.

Reputable resources

The New Zealand Health Education Association has a helpful resource that covers alcohol and other drugs that can be applied to vaping: [*Alcohol and other drugs. Health Education activities to support teaching and learning for Levels 4-8 in The New Zealand Curriculum.*](#)

Tūturu has a useful resource called [*The Marketing of: Energy drinks & vaping*](#) that challenges students to think critically about advertising messages and other indirect methods of promoting vaping products and teaches them to respond in ways to promote wellbeing.

Check out Tūturu's webinar: [*How schools can respond to youth vaping.*](#)



Teaching and learning ideas

Here is an overview of ideas for teaching and learning about vaping.

Teaching at intermediate and junior secondary levels

What are the health and wellbeing concerns about vaping?

- Review Aotearoa New Zealand and international data about the rates of vaping product use by young people.
- Use Te Whare Tapa Whā to unpack why the harms from vaping are a cause for concern and why being vape-free is a healthier option.
- What will be the consequences for wellbeing if vaping products are used as lifestyle products and by people who don't smoke?

Why has vaping by young people increased?

- Advertising of vaping products was banned in Aotearoa New Zealand from 25 November 2020, but before then, there was a lot of advertising. Analyse the advertising on TV and radio, online, in vape shops, in dairies and in service stations.
- What do the images and advertising messages suggest about who these products are being marketed to and for what purpose?
- How can so many young people get vapes when it's an R18 product, and it's illegal to sell and give one to someone under 18?
- Think about where vaping products are sold in dairies and supermarkets, and the placement of vaping product shops near schools and shopping areas. How do you balance the needs of people who smoke and are looking to quit by vaping against children being able to see them?

What are the laws and regulations on vaping?

- Use the [Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora](#) website to find out about current Aotearoa New Zealand laws and regulations about vaping.
- What are your school's regulations about vaping?
- How well are these current regulations about vaping known and enforced?
- What's your evidence for this?

What actions can we take to reduce harm?

- Discuss things we can do *personally*: how can we draw upon our own values, our knowledge for managing stress and reducing harm, and our support systems for health and wellbeing?
- Discuss things we can do *interpersonally*: how do we communicate with and support our friends and other people?
- Discuss things we can do as a *community and society*: what laws, policies, support systems, attitudes and practices should be promoted to support wellbeing?
- What will be the consequences for wellbeing if vaping products are used as lifestyle products and by people who don't smoke?

Teaching at senior secondary levels

What are the health and wellbeing concerns about vaping?

- Review Aotearoa New Zealand and international data about the rates of vaping product use by young people.
- Access up-to-date research from reputable online sources to check out myths about vaping harms and benefits, and what effects are supported by research.
- Critique the New Zealand Ministry of Health statement about vaping in relation to the issues about young people.
- Conduct your own school survey about the use of vaping products and students' attitudes to vaping. Do they know what are in vapes? Do they know vapes are highly addictive? Why do they vape? Do they know people use vaping to quit smoking?
- Think about the bigger picture of substance use, i.e. all alcohol and drugs. Discuss why communities or societies seldom manage to sustainably reduce or eliminate substance use issues.
- What are the cultural implications of vaping products for indigenous people? How do they relate to how cigarettes were introduced to indigenous populations?

Why has vaping by young people increased?

- Engage in critical thinking activities to investigate how vaping products are being marketed to young people. Check out [the Tūturu resource](#) about how marketing energy drinks and vaping products affect the wellbeing of young people.
- Investigate who owns the companies producing vaping products. If it's tobacco companies, why are they producing vaping products?

- Add to the school survey questions about vaping advertising. Where have students seen advertising? If they use vaping products, where do they get them from?
- How easy do you think it will be to reverse the trend of vaping among young people in Aotearoa New Zealand? Why?
- Debate who is responsible: Individual people? The law? The people who produce and market alcohol and other drug products? Others?

What are the laws and regulations on vaping?

- Find out about the Aotearoa New Zealand laws for vaping.
- Why can making new laws become complicated? Study the [Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora](#) website section on vaping law and policy and the variety of factors that need to be considered. Bear in mind that vaping can help people quit smoking and support Aotearoa New Zealand to becoming smokefree in 2025.
- Is vaping a legal matter or a health and wellbeing matter?

What actions can we take to reduce harm?

- Design, plan, and implement a health promotion process for your school aimed at being vape-free. Include a range of activities that involve all students, as well as specific support for some students who vape.
- Engage in student-led action for all students to take a stand against the use of vaping products (as lifestyle products), which includes taking personal responsibility as well as supporting others.

Laws, regulations, policies and enforcement at school

The Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990 prohibits smoking and vaping in schools, kura kaupapa, kōhanga reo and early childhood education and care centres (ECEs), including their grounds and buildings.

This means they are smokefree and vapefree at all times. School management and boards must take all reasonable steps to ensure that no person smokes or vapes in any part of the premises, inside or outside, at any time of day. This applies to everyone within the grounds and buildings such as parents, caregivers, teachers and kaiako, contractors, workers, students, and communities who use these spaces outside school hours.

Signage

Schools, kura kaupapa, kōhanga reo and ECEs must display notices stating that smoking and vaping within the premises are forbidden at all times.

These notices must be visible in locations such as:

- at or immediately inside every entrance to the premises
- at every entrance to every building within the premises.

These locations are the same as previously required for Smokefree notices under the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990.

The 'No Vaping' notices are intended to be displayed along with existing 'No Smoking' notices. All schools, kura kaupapa, kōhanga reo and ECEs were sent 'No Vaping' stickers in May 2021.

If you need more Smokefree and Vapefree resources, please order them through the Smokefree website.

[Kaua e momi haurehu/auahi kore and No vaping/Smokefree stickers | Smokefree](#)

Compliance

The following can help you ensure compliance with the Act:

- Prominently display "No Vaping" signs at every entrance to the premises and every external entrance to every building.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the families of your students and other visitors know about the requirements. For example, talk to them about it or include this in a section in a newsletter.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure other users of your site know about the requirements such as including a vapefree statement in a contract or lease for those using, hiring or managing your grounds.
- Think about what you will have to do if someone does smoke or vape on site. This may involve putting together a simple complaints procedure or action plan.

Fines

The management of schools, kura kaupapa, kōhanga reo and ECEs may be fined up to \$4,000 for not complying with the Act.

Policies

Individual schools, kura kaupapa, kōhanga reo and ECEs can decide whether or not to have a vaping policy. Most will already have a smokefree policy, and find the easiest way is to amend this to include vaping. For an example of a smokefree and vapefree policy, see [Smokefree and vapefree schools policy document \(smokefree.org.nz\)](https://smokefree.org.nz)

As part of your policy, consider your school procedures and rules. While the law applies to school buildings and grounds, you may want to extend 'No Vaping' (or vapefree) to include time when staff, whānau and students are offsite or on trips during school times.

Consultation on a draft policy and communication within the school are excellent ways to ensure buy-in and understand how vaping is perceived in your community. It may be that members of your parent and teacher community are vaping to quit smoking. You can acknowledge this in your policy while ensuring that your school remains vapefree, and that young people can be protected from unintentional role-modelling.



Resources

ASH Year 10 Snapshot Survey 2023

*How to talk to young people about vaping |
Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand, Health
Promotion*

*Kaua e momi haurehu/auahi kore and
No vaping/Smokefree stickers | Smokefree*

Protect Your Breath

*Smokefree and Vapefree schools policy
document | Smokefree*

Smokefree at school | Smokefree

*Conversation planner | New Zealand Drug
Foundation*

*Thinking critically about the marketing of
energy drinks and/or vaping products |
Tūturu*

Tūturu

Vapefree schools | Vaping Facts

*Vaping and schools | Te Whatu Ora – Health
New Zealand, Health Promotion*



Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora



Te Aka Whai Ora
Māori Health Authority