

Response process for vaping-related violations

Approved By:

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1. Purpose

GEMS Metropole School – Al Waha (MTW) is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which students are protected from the risks associated with vaping, e-cigarettes, nicotine, tobacco and other prohibited substances.

Vaping, possession, use, supply, distribution or facilitation of vaping or e-cigarette products on school premises, on school transport or during school-related activities is prohibited.

MTW will respond through a clear, consistent, proportionate and documented process prioritising:

- Student safety and safeguarding.
- Consistent behaviour management.
- Appropriate investigation and evidence gathering.
- Parent/carer engagement.
- Education and prevention.
- Student wellbeing and support.
- Appropriate escalation of serious or repeated concerns.
- Accurate record keeping and trend analysis.

The process will be implemented in accordance with the school's approved policies, GEMS procedures and applicable UAE legislation and regulatory requirements.

2. What Constitutes a Vaping-Related Violation?

- Possessing a vape, electronic cigarette, e-liquid, pod or associated vaping equipment.
- Using or attempting to use a vaping product.
- Being in possession of a vaping product belonging to another person.
- Supplying, sharing, selling or attempting to distribute vaping products.
- Encouraging, facilitating or assisting another student to vape.
- Concealing vaping products for another student.
- Purchasing or attempting to obtain vaping products for another student.
- Repeated involvement in vaping-related behaviour.
- Refusing to comply with a reasonable school instruction relating to a vaping investigation or safety procedure.

The school will distinguish, where relevant, between possession, use, supply/distribution and repeated involvement.

3. Vape Detection System

Vape detectors are installed in all Secondary student bathrooms to support prevention and early identification of vaping-related behaviour. Alerts are sent to the school's designated Executive Leadership Team (XLT) through the monitoring/alert system.

The system forms part of MTW's wider safeguarding, behaviour, health and safety and substance-misuse prevention arrangements.

3.1 Response to a Detector Alert

- The XLT is notified through the designated alert system.
- The appropriate pastoral/behaviour team member is informed.
- Staff attend the identified location promptly and appropriately.
- Staff assess the situation and maintain appropriate supervision.
- Where students are present, staff follow approved procedures for suspected possession or use of prohibited items.
- If required the corridor CCTV footage will be reviewed to identify suspects
- Where a student is identified as potentially involved, the documented investigation process is initiated.
- The incident and response are recorded.
- Consequences and actions will align with the Behaviour for Learning Policy

3.2 Detector Alerts and Evidence

A detector alert is an indicator requiring investigation and does not, in isolation, establish that a particular student has vaped.

Available information may include:

- Staff observations.
- Student and witness accounts.
- Physical evidence or items voluntarily surrendered/appropriately confiscated.
- Location and timing of the alert.
- Permitted CCTV or other safeguarding/security information, where applicable.
- Previous relevant incidents or patterns.

Records must distinguish confirmed incidents, substantiated concerns and unsubstantiated allegations.

3.3 Monitoring of Detector Alerts

The XLT will periodically review detector alerts for patterns, including repeated alerts by location, day/time, year group or recurring involvement. Findings will inform supervision, education, safeguarding planning, behaviour interventions, parent communication and prevention.

4. Immediate Response to a Suspected Vaping Incident

Step 1 – Ensure Immediate Safety

- Remain calm and avoid unnecessary confrontation.
- Remove the student from the immediate situation where appropriate.
- Inform the appropriate pastoral/behaviour team member.
- Refer immediately to the school clinic/medical team where there is a medical concern.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where there is an immediate safeguarding concern.

Staff must follow approved procedures for searches and confiscation.

Step 2 – Secure the Item

- Secure the item safely.
- Do not use or test it.
- Avoid unnecessary handling.
- Record it as evidence.
- Follow approved disposal or handover procedures.

Step 3 – Record the Initial Concern

- Date, time and location.
- Student name and year group.
- Reporting staff member.
- Nature of the concern.
- What was observed/reported.
- Relevant witnesses.
- Description of any item recovered.
- Whether the incident originated from a detector alert.
- Immediate action taken.
- Medical/safeguarding concerns.
- Parent/carer communication.
- Investigation outcome.

5. Investigation Process

The designated member of staff will undertake a fair, proportionate and documented investigation.

The investigation should establish, where possible:

- What happened?
- Was vaping confirmed, suspected or reported?
- Was a vaping product found?
- Was the student in possession of it?
- Was it used?
- Was the student supplying, sharing or distributing it?
- Were other students involved?
- Is this a first or repeated incident?
- Are there safeguarding or wellbeing concerns?
- Does the student require additional support or intervention?

The student should be given an appropriate opportunity to provide their account before a disciplinary outcome is determined. Where multiple students are involved, each should be interviewed separately and individual records maintained.

6. Parent/Carer Notification

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as reasonably practicable following confirmation of a vaping-related incident, or earlier where circumstances require immediate contact.

- Nature of the concern.

- Information established during the investigation.
- Any item recovered.
- School response.
- Consequence applied.
- Educational/wellbeing intervention.
- Further monitoring or review.

In line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy the parents/carers will be invited to a meeting to support the student's understanding, accountability and future behaviour.

7. Response and Consequences

The response will be determined in accordance with the approved Behaviour Policy and the circumstances of the individual case. Vaping and or the use of e-cigarettes is a “Red line behaviour”. In accordance with KHDA and GEMS policies, any student who engages in a red line behaviour may be subject to consequences up to, and including, automatic suspension. Students may also be isolated and / or asked to remain away from school during a period of investigation. If required, the school will request KHDA support and approval for an external suspension, a permanent exclusion and / or the prevention of re-enrollment.

8. Serious, Supply, Distribution or Repeated Incidents

Escalate to the XLT and/or DSL/DDSL where the incident involves:

- Selling or supplying vaping products.
- Distribution to other students.
- Coercion or pressure on other students.
- Repeated vaping-related violations.
- Significant quantities of products.
- Other prohibited substances.
- Significant safeguarding concerns.
- Behaviour potentially involving criminal activity.

The school should consider whether additional safeguarding procedures, external agency involvement or other reporting requirements are appropriate. Decisions will be based on available evidence and the school will not make assumptions about criminality.

9. Safeguarding and Student Welfare

Vaping should not automatically be considered solely as a disciplinary matter.

Staff should consider whether vaping may indicate:

- Peer pressure.
- Bullying or coercion.
- Exploitation.
- Substance misuse.
- Emotional or wellbeing difficulties.
- Risk-taking behaviour.
- Access to inappropriate products through adults or older students.
- Wider safeguarding concerns.

The DSL/DDSL should determine whether the concern requires a safeguarding referral, Team Around the Child intervention, counselling/wellbeing support, additional pastoral monitoring, parent/carer involvement or external support/referral.

Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis while ensuring relevant safeguarding information reaches those responsible for protecting the student.

10. Educational Intervention

To support awareness and prevention and following a confirmed incident, the school should provide an age-appropriate educational response, which may include:

- Health education relating to vaping and nicotine.
- Addiction and dependency information.
- Physical and psychological risks.
- UAE legal and school expectations.
- Decision-making and peer-pressure strategies.
- Digital/social-media influences.
- Signposting to health and wellbeing support.

The purpose is to reduce recurrence and support safer, informed choices.

11. Incident Documentation

Every confirmed vaping-related incident should have a clear audit trail:

Detector alert/report → Initial response → Investigation → Student account → Evidence review → Safeguarding screening → Parent/carer communication → Decision → Consequence → Intervention → Follow-up → Review

Record	Required information
Incident	Date, time, location and type
Detection	Staff report / detector alert / other
Students	Student(s) involved
Evidence	Items, observations and accounts
Investigation	Staff responsible and findings
Safeguarding	Screening and actions
Parents	Date, method and outcome of contact
Behaviour	Consequence applied
Intervention	Education/support provided
Follow-up	Review date and responsible staff member
Outcome	Recurrence, closure or escalation

Records must clearly distinguish facts, reported information, allegations and established findings.

13. Prevention and Environmental Controls

- Vape detectors in all Secondary student bathrooms.
- XLT monitoring and response to detector alerts.
- Appropriate supervision of identified hotspots.
- Age-appropriate health and wellbeing education.

- Substance-misuse prevention education.
- Clear communication of school expectations.
- Staff awareness and consistent reporting procedures.
- Parent/carer education and communication.
- Student voice and wellbeing initiatives.
- Monitoring emerging vaping trends and products.
- Collaboration between pastoral, safeguarding, inclusion, medical and behaviour teams.

Where data identifies a particular location, time or pattern of concern, the school may introduce proportionate additional supervision or preventative measures.

14. Review and Quality Assurance

The XLT should review vaping-related incidents and detector data periodically to identify trends and evaluate effectiveness.

- Number of detector alerts.
- Number of confirmed incidents.
- Number of unsubstantiated alerts.
- Year groups affected.
- Locations and times of incidents.
- Repeat incidents.
- Types and effectiveness of interventions.
- Parent engagement.
- Safeguarding referrals.
- Emerging patterns or risks.

Findings should inform the safeguarding action plan, behaviour improvement planning, student wellbeing provision, health education, supervision arrangements, staff training and parent communication.

15. Compliance and Accountability

This process should be read alongside MTW's approved Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Substance Misuse Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Student Welfare Policy and applicable GEMS procedures.

The process is intended to ensure vaping-related concerns are managed through a clear, consistent, transparent and documented process, with appropriate consideration of student safety, safeguarding, behaviour, wellbeing, education and prevention.

The school is required to report incidents of all use and procession to KHDA.

The school will review this procedure annually and following any significant change to UAE legislation, KHDA requirements, GEMS policy or the school's safeguarding/behaviour arrangements.



Process Summary

