

A RESOURCE FOR BC TEACHERS

SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO QUIT VAPING

School-age years are a critical time to support young people in quitting vaping and building the confidence and skills needed to make lasting, healthy choices. As an educator, you can play a pivotal role in helping students understand nicotine dependence, develop coping strategies, and feel supported in choosing a vape-free life.



INTENDED AUDIENCE:

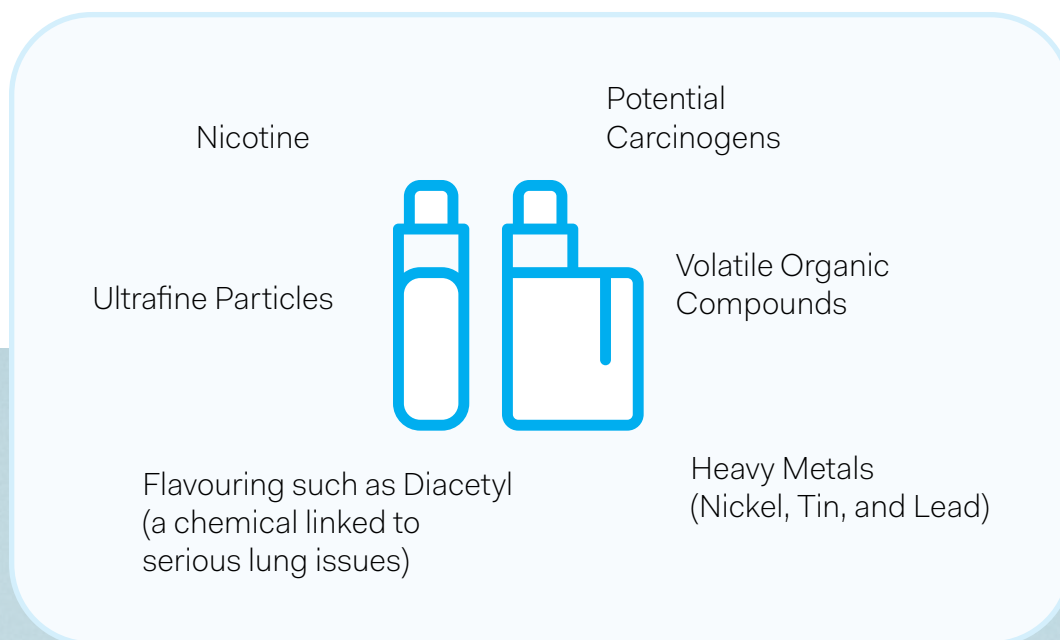
This resource is designed primarily for educators working with students in Grades 10–12 (approximately ages 15–18). It may be adapted for use to support younger students in quitting or reducing vaping.

INTRODUCTION TO VAPING

Vaping has grown in popularity among young people worldwide. Many youth who have never smoked cigarettes are being introduced to nicotine through vaping. In British Columbia, nearly 1 in 6 youth in Grades 7 to 12 vape daily. The nicotine industry appeals to youth through targeted marketing, candy-like flavours, and youth-friendly device designs.

Vapes produce many chemicals that are harmful to the body.

Common ingredients include:



WE ARE STILL LEARNING ABOUT THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF VAPING, BUT RESEARCH LINKS A NUMBER OF HEALTH RISKS:

SHORT-TERM

- Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Headaches, migraines, and dizziness
- Poor sleep
- Burns and injuries

LONG-TERM

- Chronic lung diseases (e.g., asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, emphysema) and lung damage
- Heart diseases, heart attack, and stroke
- Cancers: Lung and oral

→ **LEARN MORE**

[Vaping Products: Information for Teachers](#)

[Vaping Products: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT STUDENTS TO QUIT VAPING

We know that vaping is not safe, especially for youth. As an educator, you can play an important role in supporting students to quit or reduce vaping. Here are some things you can do:

LEARN THE SIGNS

Know the physical, behavioural, social, and academic signs that a student may be addicted to vaping.

START THE CONVERSATION

Provide a non-judgemental, safe, and supportive space for students to share their experiences.

SET REALISTIC GOALS

Help students grow awareness of the health effects of vaping, reflect on their personal goals, and consider reducing or quitting vaping.

REFER TO QUITNOW

Share resources and refer students to QuitNow. We will do the rest!



STEP 1: LEARN THE SIGNS

Familiarize yourself with the signs of vaping to identify students who may need support to reduce or quit vaping.

Physical Signs	Behavioural Signs	Other Signs
Increased coughing, throat clearing, shortness of breath, or wheezing	Having difficulty with focus, seeming distracted, or being less engaged in class	Drop in grades, motivation, classroom participation, or engagement in extracurricular activities
Appears shaky, anxious, or irritable, especially after long periods without break	Frequent requests to leave class or take bathroom breaks	Increased lateness or absences, especially around break or lunch times
Increased nose bleeds, headaches, or fatigue	Secretive behaviours like hiding hand movements with long sleeves or hoodies or putting away objects	Isolation during breaks or lunch times
Appears tired or fatigued	Note: Some vapes are designed to look like everyday items (e.g., USB drives, pens, or game controllers), making them harder to detect	Changes in friend groups
Lingering scents that smell sweet, minty, or fruity		

STEP 2: START THE CONVERSATION

Students will likely be at different points in their journey with quitting vaping. No matter where they are, your role is to create a safe, supportive space to talk openly about how vaping is affecting them and how they can find help to quit. Some ways to do this include:

- Listening with empathy and patience
- Asking open-ended questions to understand their experiences
- Validating their feelings and normalizing challenges
- Encouraging them to choose when and how they want to make changes
- Reminding them of their strengths and ability to succeed
- Celebrating small steps and progress along the way

KEY MESSAGES TO SHARE WITH STUDENTS:

- **Vaping is addictive, especially when you are young**
- **Vaping harms your physical and mental health**
- **Quitting is possible and we're here to support you**



CONVERSATION TOPICS & WHAT TO SAY

UNDERSTANDING A STUDENT'S REASONS FOR VAPING

"How did you start vaping? What are the reasons that you continue to vape?"

"I'm hearing that vaping is a way to help you to de-stress and you are aware of its negative health effects. It sounds like you may be looking for healthier ways to manage your stress."

HELPING A STUDENT IDENTIFY REASONS TO QUIT VAPING

"How might quitting nicotine affect things that matter to you? For example, school, hobbies, or friendships?"

HELPING A STUDENT RECOGNIZE NICOTINE ADDICTION AND ITS HEALTH EFFECTS

"So, I hear that you started to vape as a fun thing to do with your friends. But now, you are noticing that you can't stop even when you are by yourself. Is that right?"

"How does vaping affect your energy, mood, stress levels, or overall health?"

**HELPING STUDENTS
CONNECT HOW VAPING
IMPACTS THINGS THAT
MATTER TO THEM
(E.G., GOALS, HOBBIES,
RELATIONSHIPS)**

"You mentioned noticing that you can't run for as long as you used to without feeling out of breath. It sounds like improving your lung health is important to you."

"You mentioned that you are worried that your younger sister might pick up vaping too. How would it make you feel if she did?"

**ACKNOWLEDGING A
STUDENT'S STEPS
TOWARDS CHANGE**

"You mentioned that you went a week without vaping to prepare for your soccer match. It sounds like you are capable and have a strong willpower to make a positive change for your health."

"It sounds like you've already taken the first step to reflect on vaping. That shows self-awareness and courage for change. "

**HELPING STUDENTS
SITUATE THE
IMPORTANCE OF
QUITTING VAPING**

"On a scale from 1 to 10, how important is cutting back or quitting vaping to you right now?"



**✘ WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN SUPPORTING
A STUDENT WHO VAPES**

Keep conversations supportive, safe, and trauma-informed and try to avoid:

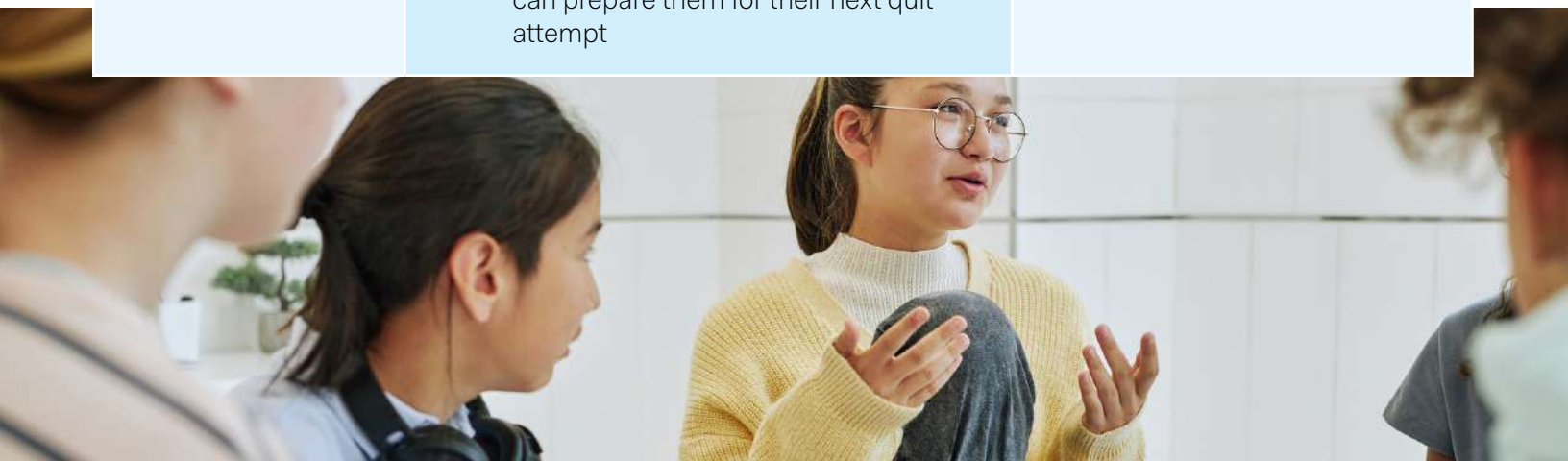
- Shaming or blaming a student for vaping
- Using scare tactics or exaggerated health claims
- Threatening punishment as a way to motivate change
- Sharing a student's experience with others without consent
- Pushing a student to quit before they feel ready

Instead, focus on listening, validating their experience, and supporting them to explore change at their own pace.

STEP 3: SET REALISTIC GOALS

You can help a student learn about the effects of vaping and set intentions to reduce or quit when they are ready. We have useful tools and resources you could share with students based on where they are in their quit journey.

SCENARIO	CONVERSATION FOCUS	QUITNOW TOOLS
If a student mentions they vape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the reasons they started and continue to vape • Assess their awareness of the health risks of vaping • Assess their readiness to make a change 	Vaping Infographic Fact Sheet: Health Risks of Vaping
If a student says they want to quit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge their efforts in taking charge of their health • Share resources for reducing and quitting nicotine • Help them set a realistic next step (e.g., making a quit plan at QuitNow) 	Smart Steps: Towards a tobacco-free life Tips to Quit Vaping I Quit for Me
If a student is unsure about quitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions to help them reflect on their challenges and barriers to quitting • Assure them that support is available when they want it • Share resources that could help answer their questions 	Smart Steps: Explore your curiosity Questions about vaping? Fact Sheet: Health Risks of Vaping
If a student tried quitting but relapsed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge their efforts and give positive affirmations: every attempt is one step closer to quitting • Listen to their frustrations and challenges • Provide resources and tools that can prepare them for their next quit attempt 	Coping Skills Toolkit Quit Journal I Quit for Me





STEP 4: REFER TO QUITNOW

Connect your students with our program and we will do the rest! At QuitNow, we provide a range of free services to help youth reduce or quit vaping. This includes:

- **QUIT COACHING:** Our expert Quit Coaches provide one-on-one guidance via live chat or telephone to help youth on their quit journey.
- **TIPS PROGRAM:** Our Text and Email Tips program deliver motivational messages, quit tips, and valuable insights to help youth stay on track.
- **PEER SUPPORT:** Let youth know that they are not alone. We aim to foster a safe and inclusive space for our community through our monthly Group Support Sessions.
- **TOOLS AND RESOURCES:** From fact sheets, toolkits, to newsletters, we provide a range of helpful tools and resources for educators, parents, caregivers, and youth.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Youth can also connect with us via [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [TikTok](#) for regular quit tips and updates.

[Learn more about our services here.](#)

MENTAL HEALTH AND VAPING

Youth experiencing challenges with their mental wellbeing may be more likely to vape as a way of coping with stress, anxiety, or difficult emotions. If a student needs additional support, encourage them to reach out for mental health support.

- [Foundry](#) offers free and confidential support for youth aged 12 to 24, available online and in-person
- [Kids Help Phone](#) is available 24/7 by texting CONNECT to 686868 or calling 1-800-668-6868
- [BC Crisis Centre](#) is available 24/7 by calling 1-800-784-2433

YOUTH MINI-SITE: [YOUR VAPE FREE LIFE](#)

Our youth mini-site provides helpful information, tools and tips to help youth quit vaping. Share it with a student who is looking for support to reduce or quit!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This document includes all external web pages and videos referenced in this resource, as well as additional links where you can learn more about supporting students in staying vape-free.

[See Resource List](#)

quitnow.ca



Visit our website
[quitnow.ca](#)



Live Chat with a
Quit Coach