

Russell Lower School Smoke-Free and Vaping Policy

Updated: Spring 2026 (Review every 4 years)

Introduction

At Russell Lower School, we take seriously our statutory duty to promote children and young people's wellbeing, their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, and their safety. We see our commitment to creating a smoke-free and vape-free environment, alongside developing pupils' knowledge, attitudes, and skills in decision-making, as a core part of our safeguarding duties (in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education) and our work on managing risk.

Definition

A drug is any substance which affects how a person thinks, feels, or behaves (World Health Organisation). The term includes medicinal, non-medicinal, legal, and illegal drugs. Therefore, "drug" within this policy refers to tobacco, nicotine, e-cigarettes/vapes, alcohol, volatile substances, medicines, illegal drugs, and psychoactive substances.

Aim

To ensure a whole-school approach to tobacco and vaping in order to protect all members of the school community from the harms of second-hand smoke/vapour, to prevent the uptake of these habits, and to reduce their prevalence across the school community.

Objectives

To provide a smoke-free and vape-free school environment for the whole school community.

- To ensure that tobacco and vaping education is an age-appropriate part of the school's progressive Primary Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and Science curriculum.
- To promote the 'smoke-free and vape-free' message to all our children.
- To ensure that all staff promote positive attitudes and behaviour in relation to tobacco and vaping.
- To ensure that staff have the knowledge and understanding of policies, procedures, and agreed practice to support the implementation of this policy.
- To involve all staff, governors, pupils, parents/carers, and members of the wider school community in the development of policy and practice.

- To adopt and support interventions that aim to prevent the uptake of smoking and vaping amongst pupils, staff, parents/carers, and the wider school community.
- To assist pupils, staff, and other members of the school community who smoke or vape and wish to stop.
- To ensure that the school's Smoke-Free and Vaping Policy is strictly applied when children are taken off-site.

Rationale

All members of the school community have the right to work and learn in an environment free from smoke and vapour.

Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease, and other illnesses. Smoking remains one of the largest preventable causes of death and illness in England.

Furthermore, the rapid rise in the use of e-cigarettes (vaping) among children and young people represents a significant public health and safeguarding concern. While vaping is recognized by the NHS as a tool to help adult smokers quit, **it is not risk-free, and it is strictly illegal to sell vaping products to anyone under the age of 18.**

Russell Lower School treats vaping with the same severity as smoking for the following reasons:

- **Health Risks:** The long-term health impacts of developing lungs inhaling vaporized chemicals and high levels of nicotine are harmful and can lead to severe nicotine addiction.
- **Safeguarding:** The illegal sale of vapes to minors, including unregulated or illicit vapes, poses a direct safeguarding and exploitation risk to our pupils.
- **Role Modeling:** Exposure to role models who smoke or vape normalizes the behaviour. Smoke-free and vape-free school sites provide positive role models for children and contribute to the development of a health-promoting school.

Providing a smoke-free and vape-free environment (Procedure)

This Policy applies to pupils, staff, parents/carers, members of the public, contractors, or others working/using the School premises or vehicles, and all vehicles used to transport students.

- Smoking and vaping are strictly prohibited in any part of the school's premises and grounds, including the entrance area to the school, car parks, garden areas, walkways, playgrounds, playing fields, and school road crossing patrol areas.

- There are no designated smoking or vaping areas provided within the School buildings or grounds.
- This policy applies to all events/activities held in the School, including before and after-school clubs, and any meetings attended by school employees or visitors.
- Statutory "No Smoking or Vaping" signage will be displayed in school areas to create a clear, positive visual message.
- Smoking and vaping are not permitted in any school-owned/hired/leased vehicles, or private vehicles when used for carrying children or staff on school business.
- This Policy applies when pupils are taken off-site on school excursions/visits/trips. Staff and accompanying helpers will be reminded that smoking and vaping are not permitted when on duty or looking after children.

Smoking and Vaping Prevention Activities (Procedure) *Pupils*

- Employees are not permitted to smoke or vape in the view of pupils, even when off school grounds but still acting in a professional capacity.
- Tobacco and vaping education is embedded within the school's RSHE and Science curriculum, focusing on age-appropriate discussions about keeping our bodies healthy, making safe choices, and understanding medicines and harmful substances.
- A range of age-appropriate methodologies will be used to deliver this education, such as discussion strategies, drama, and, where appropriate, the use of approved outside agencies.
- Parents/carers are encouraged and supported to be actively involved in their child's health education through home/school activities and informational newsletters.

Staff

- Training on managing drug-related incidents, including tobacco and vapes, alongside the delivery of the RSHE curriculum, is available for staff, the Headteacher, and School Governors.

Other Related Policies / Guidance Within the School, this Policy is linked to and consistent with:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (KCSIE)
- Educational Visits Policy
- RSHE Policy

Responding to smoking/vaping related incidents

The following procedures will apply when there is non-compliance with the Policy:

Search and Confiscation (Pupils) In line with DfE guidance and the school's Search, Screening and Confiscation Policy, if a pupil is suspected of possessing tobacco, lighters, matches, or vaping products, staff will follow safeguarding protocols.

Any confiscated smoking or vaping paraphernalia will be safely disposed of by the school and will under no circumstances be returned to the pupil or their parents/carers.

Parents will be informed, and the incident will be logged as a safeguarding and behaviour concern.

Staff The School's Disciplinary Procedure will be followed for members of staff who do not comply with this Policy. The staff member will also be offered occupational health support to help them quit smoking/vaping if desired.

Non-staff members / School visitors Staff are authorised to politely request that visitors, parents, or contractors who breach the policy extinguish their cigarette or put away their vape, or leave the school premises if they refuse to comply.

Assistance for those who smoke or vape * Free support is available for staff and parents/carers who would like to stop smoking or vaping.

- Adults can access the **NHS Better Health - Quit Smoking** service online, or contact their local Bedfordshire Stop Smoking Service
- Staff can speak confidentially to the Headteacher regarding accessing Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) or other support to manage cravings during working hours.
- The School will promote these health services periodically through parents'/carers' newsletters and the school website.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Policy will be monitored by the Headteacher to ensure compliance and its successful implementation.

The Policy will be reviewed every 4 years and ratified by the Governing Body.

References Department for Education (DfE): *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* (Current Statutory Guidance)

- Department for Education (DfE): *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* (Statutory Guidance)

- Department for Education (DfE): *Searching, Screening and Confiscation at School* * Action on Smoking and Health (ASH): *Use of e-cigarettes (vapes) among young people in Great Britain* (Latest Factsheet)
- NICE Public Health Guidance: *Tobacco: preventing uptake, promoting quitting and treating dependence*