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Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you may be aware, over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the use of electronic smoking devices by middle school students to “vape” tobacco and other nicotine products. In fact, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens, electronic smoking devices are the most commonly used form of nicotine delivery system among youth in the United States. Common additives used in electronic cigarettes include nicotine, flavorings and caffeine. In high doses, these substances may have negative effects on adolescent brain development.

Recently, however, an alarming new trend has arisen. Teens are no longer using these electronic smoking devices, referred to as “e-cigarettes,” simply to vape tobacco. These devices, now frequently referred to as “weed pens” and “weed vaporizers,” are instead being used to vape marijuana. Researchers have also recently reported that one in four high school students who use electronic smoking devices to vape marijuana use a method referred to as “dripping,” which generates higher heating coil temperatures than conventional devices and leads to greater emissions of a class of harmful chemicals known as “volatile aldehydes,” including formaldehyde and acrolein. Therefore, in addition to being illegal, marijuana vaping can have significant, dangerous health consequences.

Given the uncertainty of what substances are contained in these odorless electronic smoking devices, the inability of school officials to verify the contents of such devices through a visual or olfactory inspection, and the documented prevalence of using electronic smoking devices to vape dangerous concentrations of marijuana and other illicit substances; ***effective April 15, 2019 students who are discovered using or in possession of an electronic smoking device or its components at school or a school sanctioned event will be considered to be in possession of items reasonably determined to be drug paraphernalia. In accordance with Wenatchee School District Student Conduct Policy (3240) and Procedure (3240P), sanctions against the student, including immediate short-term or long-term suspension may be imposed.***

Additionally, other consequences outside of the District’s control may be imposed for violations of Washington state laws. RCW 70.345.150 prohibits the use of vapor products inside schools. Furthermore, RCW 70.345.140 provides that it is a class 3 civil infraction when “A person under the age of eighteen purchases or attempts to purchase, possesses, or obtains or attempts to obtain vapor products”. Any students found in violation of the above state laws will be referred to law enforcement (School Resource Officer) and any consequences levied by the courts will be in addition to any and all school consequences.

We encourage you to review Policy 3240 and Procedure 3240P, which are available on the District’s website, as they will provide additional information regarding the examination procedures, as well as the disciplinary consequences. If you are aware or suspect your child is using electronic smoking devices and/or drugs/alcohol, we encourage you to contact our Prevention Specialist, Amy McCubbin: mccubbin.a@wenatcheeschools.org or 509-663-8117 x 160. Mrs. McCubbin can provide students and their families with related counseling and resources including smoking cessation approaches as well as addressing drug/alcohol use. You may also find more resources regarding drug, alcohol, and vape use on Pioneer’s website.

Sincerely,

Rob Cline
Principal