

Talking to Your Child About Vaping and Helping Them Quit

A Toolkit for Parents



Why this toolkit exists

This toolkit was created in response to the 2024 Parent and Carers' Vaping Consultation, where many of you shared concerns about the rising use of vapes among children and young people in Jersey.

- 1 in 5 parents reported that their child vapes or smokes
- Vaping was said to be seen as normal in schools, on buses, and in public spaces
- Nicotine addiction and withdrawal symptoms were commonly described
- Many children were hiding their use, or trying and finding it difficult to stop

This guide is part of a cross-government effort to support parents like you with practical tools and conversation tips to help your child stay vape-free or quit for good.

Could my child be vaping?

Vapes can be small and easy to hide. Some look like USB drives, pens, or highlighters, and are easy to conceal in bags, pencil cases or pockets. They often come in fruity or sweet flavours and don't leave a lasting smell like cigarettes.

Signs your child might be vaping:

- **Behavioural:** mood swings, anxiety, irritability or secretiveness
- **Physical:** coughing, headaches, sore throat, or changes in appetite
- **Social:** new peer groups, unusual online purchases, or unfamiliar tech gadgets
- **Addiction symptoms:** using regularly, difficulty stopping, becoming anxious without access to their vape

If your child is vaping, encourage them to stop – not through punishment, but through support, understanding, and information.



How to talk to your child about vaping

We understand that starting the conversation can feel daunting. But open, honest dialogue is key.

- **Start when the moment feels right:** Talk casually when the topic naturally comes up – walking past a vape shop or seeing someone vape.
- **Stay calm and open:** Use a gentle, non-judgemental tone so your child knows that they can talk to you freely.
- **Listen, don't just tell:** Ask how they feel about vaping, show interest and actively listen to them and their points of view, whilst still being clear about how you feel about them vaping.
- **Be clear on your concerns:** Let them know you care about their health. Vaping can affect concentration, mood, sleep, and is highly addictive due to nicotine.
- **Offer support, not shame:** If they're vaping and want to stop, let them know help is available – and that you'll be there every step of the way.

Addiction is real – and quitting is hard

Vapes often contain high levels of nicotine, which can cause a child to become addicted quickly. This can:

- Interfere with brain development and learning
- Cause mood changes like irritability, anxiety or sadness
- Make it hard to focus at school or enjoy other activities
- Lead to withdrawal symptoms when trying to stop

If your child is addicted, quitting may take time and support. They may benefit from talking to a grown-up at their school or a youth worker or counsellor at the YES Project.

Children are more likely to make healthy choices when they see those choices modelled by adults. If you vape or smoke, consider quitting too – or talk openly with your child about the challenges of addiction and why you're trying to stop.



Build a Quit Plan with your child

Having a plan makes quitting more manageable. The following steps may help you provide practical support for your child. An online version can also be found on teen.smokefree.gov/quit-plan – a local digital quit plan for Jersey is under development too.

Step 1: Understand their “why”

Ask: Why do you want to quit?
Write it down – it might be health, saving money, sport, or feeling more in control. Revisit it when they’re struggling.

Step 2: Pick a quit date

Choose a date in the next 1–2 weeks.
Avoid times of high stress, like exams. Mark it on a calendar together.

Step 3: Spot triggers

Identify moments that make them want to vape (e.g. after school, with certain friends, when bored or stressed). Brainstorm healthy alternatives.

Step 4: Plan for cravings

Cravings will come. Prepare tools to manage them:

- Mints or gum
- Breathing exercises or a short walk
- Texting a friend
- Keeping their hands busy with a stress toy or drawing

Support is available

If your child needs support with vaping, visit gov.je/vaping. The YES Project can offer 1:1 help for young people - visit yes.je

Tackling youth vaping is not just a school or government issue – it’s a whole-community effort.

Even if the first conversation doesn’t go perfectly, opening that door means your child knows they can come to you.