

March 3, 2023

Dear EACHS Parents/Guardians,

In October, we sent a letter to share information about the continued trend of vaping among teens across the United States and locally. We've seen students continue to struggle with vaping and substance use, so want to keep you up-to-date with the latest information.



### The Issue

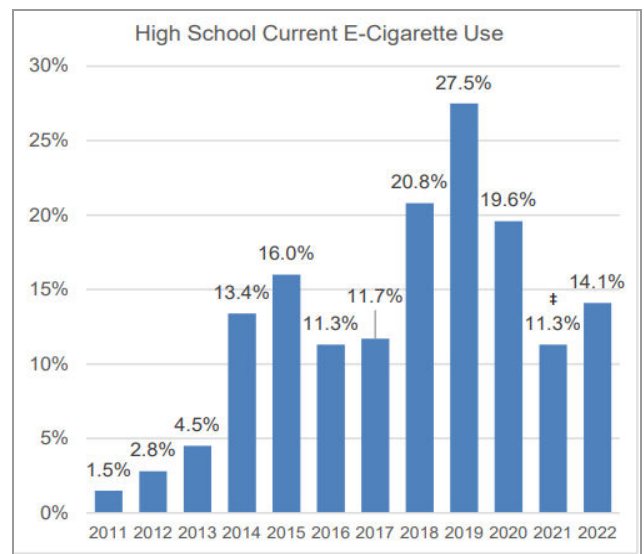
Did you know that **more than 2.5 Million Youth Reported E-Cigarette Use in 2022**<sup>1</sup>? This means that even if your teen isn't using these products, chances are they have a friend who is. Among those, almost 44% of high school students reported using their e-cigarette on **20 or more** of the previous 30 days<sup>2</sup>. And, **1 of every 3** high school students said they had tried a tobacco product.

### What Are E-Cigarettes?

E-cigarettes produce an aerosol by heating a liquid that usually contains **nicotine** (which is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development until age 25<sup>3</sup>) or **marijuana** (which has been linked to mental health problems, such as depression and social anxiety<sup>4</sup>). The aerosol - which many teens believe is harmless - also contains **toxic chemicals and metals** that seep into the bloodstream. These products have become increasingly accessible due to social media, and other e-platforms. Vaping is illegal for anyone under the age of 21. You can see a **visual dictionary** of vapes and paraphernalia by clicking [here](#).

### How Parents Can Help

- Talk to your child about their health and habits. Keep an eye out for changes in behavior:
  - a change in peer group
  - carelessness with grooming
  - decline in academic performance
  - missing classes or skipping school
  - loss of interest in favorite activities
  - trouble in school or with the law
  - changes in eating or sleeping habits



<sup>1</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Source](#)

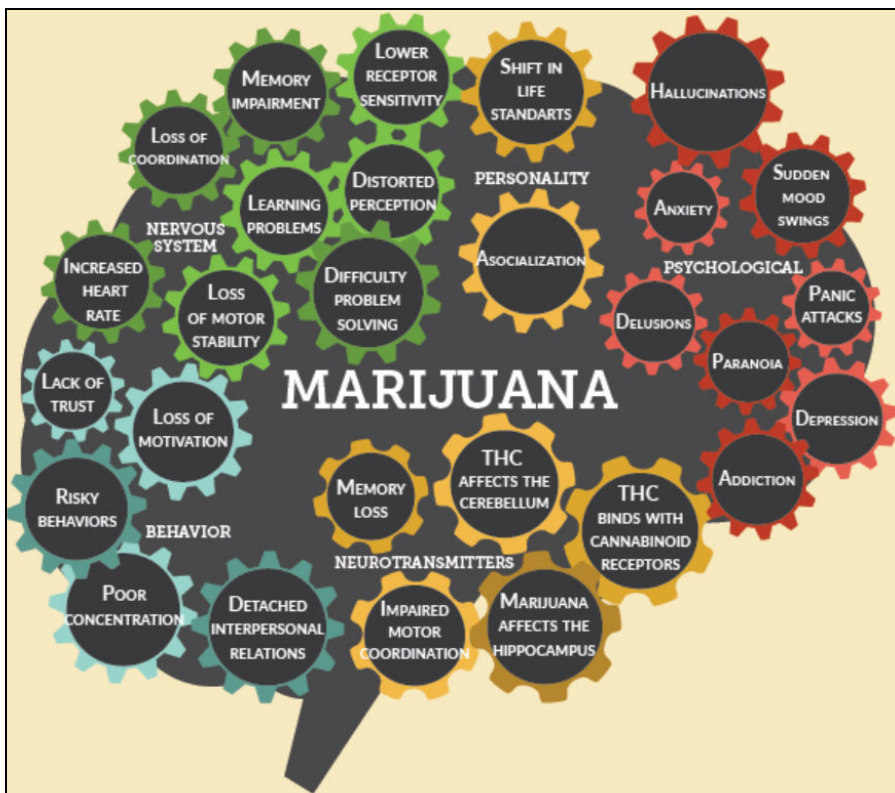
<sup>4</sup> [Source](#)



- Support your teen to develop positive relationships with trusted adults.
- You can check out the Smoke Free US Instagram [here](#).
- If your child is vaping or using other substances, an assessment for co-occurring mental health issues is important to develop the most appropriate plan to help them. Talk to your doctor to get your child help with this.

### **School Action**

The administration at Excel Academy will continue enforcing disciplinary action for possession or consumption of forbidden substances or materials, or complicity with those who vape or consume edibles. The school's bathrooms are equipped with vape detectors. Students who are in the bathroom at the time of a vape alert will be asked to report to the Dean's Office where they may undergo a bag or belonging search. Students may face disciplinary action including community service, suspension and/or expulsion for the possession, consumption, and distribution of forbidden substances.



### **Partnerships and Resources**

Excel continues to partner with [iDECIDE](#) (**D**rug **E**ducation **C**urriculum: **I**ntervention, **D**iversion, and **E**mpowerment) to provide science-based intervention for students caught violating school substance policy. iDECIDE was developed in collaboration between Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and the Institute for Health and Recovery. Students can meet with a trained facilitator at school to learn more about the harmful effects of substance use, how to identify triggers, and alternatives to support their needs.

If you have questions about the safety of your child, please reach out to the school. Thank you for your support and partnership as we continue to ensure that all our students are healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Ure  
 Dean of Students