

Mill Green School, Lansbury Avenue

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Headteacher: Mr Sean Lenahan



**Mill Green
School**

11th December 2023

Dear Parents / Carers

I am writing with regards to our Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy and Smoke Free School Policy, with particular reference to electronic cigarettes and 'vapes'.

Mobile Phones

At Mill Green School, we recognise that mobile phones are an integral part of our lives and for young people in particular, they are objects of huge significance and that a number of our learners come into school with their mobile phones.

Our Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy is in place to safeguard all of our school community, reduced distractions that can impact on learning and to reduce the risk of loss or damage. Our policy is very clear on young people bringing their phones into school; our learners are allowed to bring their mobile devices / smartphones into school, however they must be handed into reception on arrival. Items and devices which are handed in are stored securely until the end of the day. Unfortunately, we have become aware of young people bringing their mobile phones into school and keeping them on their person, in breach of the school policy.

Where a young person does not hand their phone in to the office, staff will request that this is done so. If a young person refuses to hand over their mobile telephone or device, the item will be confiscated and parents/carers will be required to collect the phone in person, or the phone will be handed to transport escorts for return home. If a young person continues to refuse to hand over their phone when asked, staff will deal with the incident in line with school behaviour policy and appropriate sanctions will be put in place.

If you need to contact your child during the school day, please contact the school office and we will ensure that any messages are passed on.

To support Safeguarding at Mill Green, we would ask that you complete the short mobile phone survey link so that we are aware of which of our young people bring their phones into school. We will also be carrying out spot checks throughout the remainder of the term and in the new year regarding mobile phones.

The survey can be accessed through the following link <https://forms.office.com/e/uC46tX8cnY> or via the QR Code on the weekly school newsletter.

Cigarettes / E-Cigarettes / Vapes

As you may be aware, there has been a rise in the use of e-cigarettes and 'vapes' across society, particularly amongst young people. We have recently been made aware of an increase in the number of incidents in our local community where children and young people are being exposed to potentially harmful substances using vapes. The purpose of highlighting this to our school community is to raise awareness of key issues, to provide you with useful resources and to alert you to the potential consequences should young people be found to be in possession of smoking / vaping paraphernalia on school premises.



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Like cigarettes, shops and other retailers cannot sell vaping items to people under the age of 18. This includes the sale of vaping equipment, including liquids and devices. It is, therefore, clear that young people under the age of 18 should not be purchasing or be in possession of alternative nicotine products such as vapes. Whilst we do have young people who are 18 and above in school, due to the mixed-aged nature of some of our classes, we have a zero-tolerance policy with regards to cigarettes and any smoking related paraphernalia, including e-cigarettes and vapes. It is also illegal for anyone who is 18 or older to buy, or be found attempting to buy tobacco or vaping products for anyone under the age of 18.

Smoking or vaping items are classed as prohibited items within the school rules. Any young person who is found to have these items on their person will be subject to disciplinary sanctions in line with the school behaviour policy. These items will be confiscated and properly disposed of by the school; they will not be handed back to young people or parents.

As parents and carers, you can support us by talking to your young people openly about the risks posed by smoking and vaping to ensure that they are well informed and have clear guidance that these products are to be avoided. You can also contact school or your GP should you have any concerns around your young person smoking or vaping.

Sadly, we must recognise that some young people may develop an addiction to nicotine and may see the use of a vape being a safer alternative to smoking cigarettes. They may also have succumbed to peer pressure or simply be curious and want to try vaping. If this is the case, we would like to guide you to the following websites which provide helpful information to support you to raise this important issue with your child:

- ASH (Action on Smoking and Health): <https://ash.org.uk/fact-sheets/>
- Kids Health: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/e-cigarettes.html>
- St Helens Wellbeing – Stop Smoking <https://www.sthelenswellbeing.org.uk/services/stop-smoking>

Additionally, any items which are identified as being prohibited by the school rules will also be subject to confiscation and disposal, where appropriate.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your anticipated support as this contributes to the safety and wellbeing of those within our school community. Our aim is not to be draconian but to ensure that Mill Green School is a safe and distraction free environment for our young people to learn and grow in.

Yours sincerely,



Sean Lenahan

Headteacher



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