

Educator Quick Guide:

Responding to Vaping at School

Aligned with PPM 128 & Progressive Discipline (PPM 145)

Purpose:

This guide supports school staff in knowing what to say and do when they observe or suspect vaping at school. It provides guidance for responding calmly, using positive and respectful language, and following school/board procedures. The guide doesn't assign disciplinary measures or replace school/board policies. Educators are expected to refer an incident to administration in accordance with established procedures.

Why an Education-Focused Approach?

Vaping is a health and behaviour concern. PPM 128 emphasizes prevention, education, and awareness of health impacts related to vaping. When combined with the progressive discipline framework of PPM 145, responses to student vaping should:

- Support prevention and early intervention.
- Support student learning and their well-being.
- Consider the individual student and their circumstances.
- Avoid approaches that shame or escalate behaviour.

The goal is to:

- address behaviour,
- maintain a safe and inclusive school climate,
- connect students to supports,
- not punish or shame them.

Responding to a Vaping Incident: A 3-Step Approach for Educators

1. Address It Calmly

2. Use Supportive Language (ASK → ACT)

3. Follow School Policy and Refer



1. Address It Calmly

- Respond as soon as it's safe and appropriate.
- Use a neutral and respectful tone.
- Avoid public confrontation, lectures, or arguments.

Example:

"I noticed something that looked like a vape just now. Let's check in for a moment."

"I need to check in with you about something I just saw. Let's talk for a moment."

Remember:

Your role is to **notice, engage respectfully, and refer.**

Using calm, positive language helps keep students safe, supported, and ready to learn.



2. Use Supportive Language (ASK → ACT)

You **don't** need to have a long conversation. A brief, respectful check-in helps set the tone until administration follows-up.

ASK—Learn First

- ✓ Use open-ended, curious questions to understand the situation.
- ✓ Listen without interrupting.
- ✓ Avoid assumptions or accusations.

Examples:

- *"Can you help me understand what was going on?" What made it hard to not vape at school?"*
- *I noticed you vaping with friends. Can you tell me more about how it started?"*

A 15-second response might sound like:

"I saw the vape, it's not allowed at school. Are you okay? I'll need to refer this so we can support you."

"I noticed the vape. This will need to be followed-up, but I want to check that you're okay."



3. Follow School Policy and Refer

You **aren't expected** to determine consequences or provide disciplinary follow-up. You should:

- Follow your school/board code of conduct, policy, and procedures.
- Refer the incident to administration as required.
- Document/report as required, you may be called as a witness if the Health Unit is contacted.

ACT – Respond Clearly with Support

Based on what you hear:

- ✓ Reinforce expectations.
- ✓ Offer brief information if appropriate.
- ✓ Identify next steps.

Examples:

- *"Since vaping isn't allowed at school, I need to pass this along to make sure you get the right support."*
- *"Let's check in later so we can talk about what you need. I want to make sure you're supported."*



Key Messages to Reinforce with Students

- Vaping is not allowed on school property.
- The school's approach focuses on learning and support.
- Help is available for stress, peer pressure, or nicotine dependence.
- Expectations apply consistently to all students.

What Happens Next? (Led by Administration School Board Policy)

As part of a progressive discipline response, administration may:

- Speak further with the student.
- Connect them to well-being or cessation supports.
- Contact parents/caregivers when appropriate.
- Contact the Health Unit Tobacco and Vaping Enforcement Officers (TVEOs) to support.
- Assign educational opportunities, such as the PPM 128 vaping e-module, where appropriate.

Helpful Resources:

- School/Board Code of Conduct and Policies
- [Quash Brief Conversations Toolkit](#): short scripts, tips, for supportive conversations.
- [Substance Use Conversations with Youth: Tips for Adult Allies](#): guidance for support.
- [WECHU PPM 128 Policy Enhancement Toolkit Supporting Schools with Youth Vaping](#)

