



STAFFORDSHIRE  
**POLICE**

## Drug laced vapes in a school setting

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### Overview

Staffordshire Police have identified an increase in reports of vapes being sold to children—many of which are suspected to contain dangerous substances such as THC or synthetic cannabinoids, including Spice. This issue represents a serious and emerging threat to the safety and wellbeing of young people across Staffordshire. These illegal products not only pose significant health risks but may also increase children’s vulnerability to criminal exploitation and long-term harm.

To respond effectively, we are seeking to deepen our understanding of the scale, nature, and dynamics of this issue within our communities.

One key element of this work is engaging with educational settings to strengthen our knowledge of this growing trend and identify areas that could benefit from additional support from the drug and alcohol young people’s team.

### School request and process

Schools supporting young people frequently receive information relating to vape use—whether involving nicotine-based devices or vapes suspected to contain illicit substances such as THC, “Cali” pens, or Spice.

To help us understand the scale of drug-laced vape use within schools, Staffordshire Police request that any relevant information is submitted as intelligence via the Partner Information Sharing Report, attached to this email. Please ensure all sections of the form are completed so the information can be properly assessed and actioned.

We also recognise that schools have their own powers and policies that allow staff to confiscate vapes from pupils.

Staffordshire Police now have access to a vape testing machine capable of field-testing liquids, vapour, and gummies to identify whether they contain THC or Spice—both Class B drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The device provides results within 15 seconds, enabling immediate identification.

A process map has been developed to guide schools in contacting the Staffordshire Police SPOC to arrange testing of suspected drug-laced vapes. This can be found at the end of this document.

Our aim is to offer a maximum turnaround time of seven working days, depending on officer availability to collect the item from the school.

Schools should also consider how best to communicate with the pupil whose vape has been confiscated, as well as their parent or guardian. They should be informed that the vape will be shared with Staffordshire Police for testing, and that police contact may follow if necessary.

### Purpose of the project

The intention behind this work is to better educate young people about the risks associated with vape use—particularly when the contents are unknown. Many young people believe they are using THC or CBD products, unaware that highly potent and addictive synthetic cannabinoids such as Spice are becoming more common due to their low production cost.

If a confiscated vape is found to contain a Class B drug, Staffordshire Police will follow up with the young person to discuss the findings and establish where the substance was obtained. This enables appropriate safeguarding actions to be taken and support pathways to be put in place.

### Items to consider for confiscation (but not limited to)



### Future work

Dependant on the prevalence of vapes within a school setting there may be a request for police to attend the school and provide real time vape testing capability.

If this is something you wish to request please contact DI Ash Bennett ([Ashley.bennett@staffordshire.police.uk](mailto:Ashley.bennett@staffordshire.police.uk)) of the Child Exploitation Investigation Team to discuss making these arrangements.

## Process map - suspected drug laced vapes in school settings

