Haverhill Public Schools
Curriculum Office

Dear Grade 4 Families,

We share your concerns regarding vaping behaviors that are on the rise, particularly for the adolescent age group. It is encouraging that the prevalence of e-cigarette use has declined among U.S. adolescents slightly in the past few years. However, studies show that the intensity of use and addiction are problematic, particularly since tobacco use is established during adolescence. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the issue, give you resources if you feel your child is involved in this kind of behavior, as well as notify you that lessons will be provided to all Grade 4 students on vaping. We take this issue very seriously due to the negative health effects vaping can have on our students and often find that our parents and younger students are often not aware of the risks around vaping.

Health classes are provided to all Haverhill Public School students in both middle and high school beginning in Grade 5. The curriculum is devoted to topics that are an important part of adolescence. The age appropriate lessons are taught by trained and qualified teachers, in a factual way. The curriculum is led by the Massachusetts Health Frameworks and National Health Standards. Our school nurses, as well Meghan Correll, the District Coordinator of Health and Wellness are also valuable resources who are available to support these important lessons.

We feel it is important to partner with you on educating our students. We want to educate appropriately before students encounter without proper preparation and knowledge on their own and/or are misinformed. These lessons will be provided to Grade 4 classes by the Physical Education Teacher. All teachers have been training to initiate these lessons. By the end of the school year, the students will have learned: what vaping is, why it is dangerous, why kids may vape, how to identify vape products and who to contact with questions and concerns.This year, we will be introducing a lesson on hygiene. This is basic information on the importance of washing your hands, brushing your teeth, why your body sweats, and the importance of showering/bathing due to germs and bacteria. Puberty lessons do not start until grade 5, however, we feel it is important that our students understand the importance of hygiene for their own health and wellbeing. We understand that families play a vital role in these conversations. We are aware that some of our students are starting to experience the stage of human growth and development earlier and earlier. To support you, we are sharing a list of trusted resources that can help guide discussions at home:

- Books and guides for children and caregivers about growing up
- Reputable websites with clear, age-appropriate information
- Tips for starting conversations and answering common questions

The information provided to students will be based upon solid evidence based information: HealthSmart ETR, National Institute of Health, Center for Disease Control, PBS Kids, Harvard Health Publishing, Mass.gov. and Stanford University: You and Me Together Vape Free Curriculum.

We encourage all students to be a part of this instruction time. However, if you wish your student to not participate, they may be excluded from this lesson and supervised in an alternate location. If you are opposed to your child participating in these lessons, please contact your scholar's teacher by email as soon as possible. If the teacher is not contacted, it is assumed they have permission to participate in the lessons.

Meghan Correll- District Coach of Health and Wellness