Changes to Tobacco and Vape laws

Tobacco and Vaping Legislation Changes: October 2026 and January 2027
For: Headteachers, RSHE/PSHE subject leads, safeguarding leads and pastoral teams

What is Changing?
On 29 October 2026 and 1 January 2027, the law is changing because of the tobacco and vapes act. These new laws help to strengthen public health and support a smoke free generation by reducing smoking uptake and preventing nicotine addiction among children and young people.

Schools are reminded to ensure that RSHE teaching materials and pupil and parent facing information reflect these updates.

The 2025 RSHE guidance states that when teaching:
'The starting principle should be that applicable law should be taught in a factual way so that pupils are clear about their rights and responsibilities as citizens.' DFE 2025

It is therefore important that teaching materials reflect and keep pace with changes to the law. The guidance states that *'Pupils should be 'made aware of the relevant legal provisions when relevant topics are being taught, including for example those relating to… alcohol, smoking, vaping and nicotine products' DFE 2025*

The guidance states that by the end of primary school pupils should know

'The facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, vaping, alcohol use and drug-taking. This should include the risks of nicotine addiction, which are also caused by other nicotine products such as nicotine pouches.' DFE 2025

And by the end of secondary school pupils should know

'The facts about the multiple serious harms from smoking tobacco (particularly the link to lung cancer and cardiovascular disease), the benefits of quitting and how to access support to do so. 7. The facts about vaping, including the harms posed to

young people, and the role that vapes can play in helping adult smokers to quit.' DFE 2025

Changes Taking Effect from 29 October 2026
Vaping and Nicotine Products

From **29 October 2026**, strengthened controls will apply to vaping and nicotine products.
Key messages for pupils:

- It is illegal to sell vaping products to anyone under the age of 18 (this update now includes nicotine free vapes; nicotine vapes have been age restricted since 2015).
- It is illegal to sell other nicotine products such as nicotine pouches to anyone under the age of 18
- It is illegal for an adult to purchase vaping or nicotine products on behalf of someone under 18 (known as proxy purchasing).
- Restrictions will apply to promotional activity, including free giveaways and certain discounting practices.
- Vending machines selling vaping and nicotine products will be prohibited.

Changes Taking Effect from 1 January 2027

From 1 January 2027, it will be illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009. This is a significant change to the law that will increase the age of sale year on year in order to support the aim of creating a smokefree generation and protect future generations from the harms of smoking

It means that young people currently in education who were born on or after this date will never legally be able to purchase tobacco products, regardless of their age in the future.

Schools may wish to explore with students:

- What the aims of these law changes are
- How they might impact people
- How they might impact services such as the NHS

For more information on tobacco and vapes to support RSHE/PSHE lessons

www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/help-others-quit/young-people-and-vaping

www.talktofrank.com for information and key messages around tobacco, vapes and other nicotine products

pshe-association.org.uk/lesson-plans/drug-education Lessons plans and information from the PSHE association

Resources: young people and stopping smoking The National Centre for Smoking Cessation Training

Smokefree generation communications toolkit - ASH Action for Smoking. Includes FAQ section about the tobacco and vapes act

Nicotine pouches - ASH – Information about nicotine pouches

For support to quit smoking locally please visit

https://livewellrwb.org/ Live Well Reading and West Berkshire

www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com Smokefree Life Berkshire Wokingham and Bracknell

In Bracknell Forest, Smokefree life Berkshire also offers stop vaping support for young people aged 12-18 and adults with health or respiratory conditions. This includes one-to-one support, quit tools and behaviour change guidance.

Reporting underage sales

If you have concerns about retailers not complying with updated age of sales laws relating to vapes, nicotine products or tobacco please contact Tsadvice@westberks.gov.uk

ChatHealth School Nursing

Young people in Berkshire aged 11-19 can contact a school nurse by texting 07312263266