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Re: BCHS Zero Tolerance Policy - vapor products

Dear Parents/Guardians of BCHS students:

I hope you have had a wonderful summer and are ready for a GREAT 2022-23 school year at BCHS! In partnership with Barren County Schools, I want to make you aware of a significant change to the BCHS policy regarding students found to be in possession of vapor products.

In recent years, the use of vapor products has become a significant issue for students. We have seen a substantial increase in incidents of students bringing these items to school. This year, BCHS will be a ZERO TOLERANCE campus for such products. Accordingly, and in accordance with KRS 600.020(51), if any student is found to be in possession of a vapor product (vape pen and/or vape cartridge) at school, a public offense action for the possession of drug paraphernalia will be brought against them. This policy applies to students for all campus activities.

While we hope to not have a single incident of this occurrence, we do want all parents/guardians of students to be aware of this change in procedure. Kentucky Revised Statutes, and specifically KRS 438.350, prohibits the possession or use of tobacco products, alternative nicotine products and/or vapor products by persons under the age of 21. As such, and in accordance with KRS 218A.500 and KRS 218A.510, any student found in possession of a vapor product at school, including any after-school on-campus activity, will be referred to the Court Designated Worker Office and the Office of the Barren County Attorney for the public offense of possession of drug paraphernalia, a class A misdemeanor. Additionally, all products prohibited by KRS 438.350 will be confiscated by law enforcement and will not be returned.

In taking this step, it is our sincere hope to address the use of these products by our children and to curb the rate at which these items are introduced to youth not otherwise exposed to these products. Additionally, this new approach will enable us to offer resources, such as education and addiction counseling, to those students that are already habitual users of these products.

If you are not aware of the health dangers commonly associated with the use of vapor products, I encourage you to reach out to Shelly Thomas, *Youth Service Center Coordinator for Barren County Schools*, for additional information.

I commend Barren County Schools for leading this effort in keeping our children safe. Thanks and recognition are also due to Judge John Alexander, Judge Mica Wood Pence, Judge Gabe Pendleton, the Office of Barren County Sheriff Kent Keen and the Barren County Court Designated Worker Office for their input on, and participation in, finding a solution to this rising problem.

In conclusion, I personally want to wish your student a successful 2022-23 academic year.

We are BC!

Kathryn M. Thomas  
Barren County Attorney