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Smoke or Smokeless: Schools Say No Cigarettes of Any Kind

Change to school policy adds smokeless e-cigarettes to ban on school property.

Posted by John Patten (Editor), October 31, 2013 at 03:34 PM

Look around and you may notice a growing trend: teens and young adults strolling through shopping malls or sitting in lounges puffing on small sticks with a glow at the end.

They're not smoking cigarettes, exactly: They're taking advantage of the growing market for e-cigarettes, battery-powered devices that provide a wisp of water vapor to the users that may contain nicotine or be flavored like traditional tobacco products. Users say they're not smoking—they're "vaping."

But they're also taking advantage of a lack of regulation that hasn't quite pinned down whether smoking bans apply.

School districts aren't waiting for FDA regulations or state laws to catch-up, and the New Jersey Schools Boards Association is advising districts in the state to add restrictive language to existing smoking bans to include e-cigarettes—which the Hillsborough Board of Education acted on this week.

Superintendent Jordan Schiff said he hasn't heard any reports of "vaping in the boy's room" at Hillsborough schools—and with the new policy in place, anyone doing so faces the same punishment as regular smokers: Saturday detention, with possible suspension for subsequent violations, as well as a possible visit to answer a municipal charge of violating smoking bans.

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