MOUNT OLIVE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Mount Olive High School Students and Families,

As we begin the school year, I want to take a moment to address an issue that continues to impact high schools across the country: vaping.

Vaping is not harmless. Many vaping products contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and can affect the developing adolescent brain. Nicotine use can interfere with attention, learning, mood, and impulse control. Vape aerosol can also contain harmful chemicals, ultrafine particles, and metals that can be inhaled deep into the lungs.

Some vaping devices contain THC, the primary psychoactive chemical in cannabis (marijuana) that produces a "high." THC can also pose serious risks to teenagers, whose brains are still developing. Cannabis use during adolescence can affect memory, attention, judgment, and learning, and frequent use can increase the risk of dependence and other mental and physical health concerns. THC vape products can also contain highly concentrated levels of THC and other potentially harmful substances.

Beyond the health risks, vaping is also creating a serious facilities issue at our high school.

Students sometimes attempt to dispose of vaping devices by flushing them down toilets or placing them into drains. Vaping devices contain lithium batteries, electronic components, and residual nicotine, THC, and other chemicals. These materials do not belong in our wastewater system.

When vaping devices are flushed, they can damage our septic and plumbing systems, interfere with equipment, create environmental and safety concerns, and result in significant repair costs. These are avoidable expenses that divert resources away from classrooms, programs, activities, and other student needs.

I am asking every student to understand three simple expectations:

Do not bring a vape to school.
Do not use a vape at school.
Do not flush or improperly dispose of a vaping device.

Students who are struggling with nicotine, THC, or other substance use should also know that help is available. I encourage students to speak with a counselor, Student Assistance Counselor, school nurse, administrator, or another trusted adult if they need support.

For students and families looking for additional information or support, the following resources may be helpful:

Vaping Education and Support

- Vaping Information – The Real Cost
- Vaping Resources – Smokefree Teen

General Substance Use Prevention and Support

- Prevention is Key

Finally, students and families should understand that vaping violations have consequences beyond our Student Code of Conduct.

When appropriate, vaping violations may be referred to the Mount Olive Municipal Court, where a summons may be issued. Based on our current process, court-imposed penalties have been approximately:

First offense: $283
Second offense: $500
Third offense: up to $1,000

These fines are imposed and collected through the municipal court and are separate from school-based disciplinary consequences.

Our goal is to educate our students, provide support when it is needed, and ensure they understand that the decisions they make can have health, financial, and broader consequences. I appreciate the partnership of our students and families in helping us maintain a safe, healthy, and responsible school environment.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sumit Bangia
MOTSD Superintendent of Schools