



Pearl River School District

135 West Crooked Hill Road
Pearl River, New York 10965-2730

www.pearlriver.org

Phone: 845-620-3922 – Fax: 845-620-3927
pochintestam@pearlriver.org

Marco F. Pochintesta
Superintendent of Schools

September 24, 2019

Dear Parents,

I am sure you are aware of the physical dangers and health risks associated with a relatively new trend among teens, e-cigarettes, also known as vaping or juuling. There has been a steady stream of news regarding vaping, and it has been referred to as a national epidemic. As of September 19th, the CDC reported that 530 cases of lung injury and 7 deaths nationwide have occurred to users of vaping products*. We have been concerned about this new trend for several years and our fears and the latest reports are alarming. Governor Cuomo recently banned the sale of all flavored vaping liquid in NYS. These “fun” and “fruity” flavors are a disturbing sign of the intentional marketing strategy that attracted children to vaping.

I’d like to take a moment to review some of the actions the District has taken to address this serious concern. Our Code of Conduct was updated in 2014 to prohibit the use of electronic cigarettes on all school properties and activities. We first became aware that students were using these products in the spring of the 16-17 school year. In the fall of 2017, we began an extensive education campaign for students, parents and faculty that included the following:

- Updated the health curriculum in grades 5,6,7,8, and 10 to include a unit on vaping;
- Presentations to all students in grades 8-12 during physical education classes during the first two months of school;
- Letter to all parents regarding concerns about vaping;
- 7th Grade DARE program covers this topic;
- We have held a Parent University on this topic for the last two years and have another one scheduled for October 3rd at 7PM at the MS for all parents;
- We posted our Parent University on vaping on our YouTube channel;
- Training and awareness for our middle school and high school faculty staff in small groups;
- Information on our website for parents at the following link:

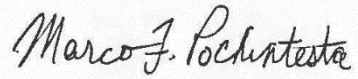
https://prhs.pearlriver.org/groups/55622/prhs_guidance/keeping_teenagers_safe

Our HS students are also playing a role in peer education. Our SADD club (Students Against Destructive Decisions) by starting a poster campaign against vaping and speaking to 8th grade students in PE classes. Our HS VAASA club (Varsity Athletes Against Substance Abuse) has spoken to MS students on this topic as well.

We must continue to educate our students and present a united message from home and school in order to help our children make good decisions and stay safe. I am including a link to an informational handout and two videos on YouTube that were recently released by the Upstate NY Poison Center; one video is for parents and one is for students. Please take a few moments to review these materials. You probably have already had a conversation with your child

about vaping. If you have, I hope that you can use this message as an opportunity to continue the conversation, perhaps aided by new information. If you have not, please use this as the occasion to have that talk. You may want to begin by asking if they know what it is, and what they know about it and then present them with the facts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marco J. Pochintesta". The signature is written in a cursive style and is set against a light gray rectangular background.

[Vaping Informational Flyer for Parents](#)

Vaping Video for Students: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mS9bnUGQGo&feature=youtu.be>

Vaping Video for Parents: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OxUpuPIfaA>

* https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html