



# Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School

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*Over Fifty Years of Living the Gospel through Education, Worship and Service*

September

Dear Parents,

As we begin the 2019-20 school year, we wish to share information written by one of our school counselors for the Diocese of Scranton, Mrs. Elizabeth Devine, to alert our school families to an important August 30, 2019, warning issued by the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) regarding very serious vaping-related lung illnesses.<sup>1</sup> More than 380 confirmed cases of severe pulmonary disease and seven deaths associated with the use of e-cigarette products have been reported in 36 states, *including Pennsylvania*. Otherwise healthy individuals have become seriously ill with respiratory illnesses or have experienced the gradual onset of gastrointestinal symptoms after using e-cigarettes. Vaping or e-cigarette products include devices, liquids, refill pods, and cartridges. E-cigarettes contain harmful or potentially harmful substances for developing brains, including nicotine, heavy metals, volatile organic compounds, and cancer-causing chemicals. Additionally, some e-cigarette products are used to deliver illicit substances like tetrahydrocannabinol [THC] and cannabinoid compounds; may be acquired from unknown or unauthorized “street” sources; and may be modified for uses that could increase their potential for harm to the user. The CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are focusing on possible contaminants or solvents which users may buy off the street to make do-it-yourself-home brews as potential sources for the illnesses.

Vaping is widely recognized as an epidemic among our youth.<sup>2</sup> The findings from the 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey show that more than 3.6 million middle and high school students were current (within the last 30 days) e-cigarette users in 2018.<sup>3</sup> This is a dramatic increase of more than 1.5 million users from the previous year despite the CDC warning against e-cigarette use for youth and young adults, among others. We acknowledge that vaping is an issue among students. By arming parents with the most up-to-date statistics on the alarming growth in e-cigarette use and the current risk of serious pulmonary illness from e-cigarette products, we hope to encourage parents to discuss e-cigarette use with their children. If use is suspected, products should be checked for non-manufacturer packaging, modifications, and illicit ingredients. Check with your health care provider if you have immediate health-related concerns. As part of our goal to educate the whole child, we will continue to provide timely information on this subject as it becomes available throughout the school year.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00421.asp>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/results-2018-national-youth-tobacco-survey-show-dramatic-increase-e-cigarette-use-among-youth-over>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/youth-tobacco-use-results-national-youth-tobacco-survey>

We thank you for your trust in us to be your partner in the education of your children. We take very seriously our responsibility to foster strong, healthy students who are the future leaders of our community. As always, if there are any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey K. Lyons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeffrey" and last name "Lyons" clearly distinguishable.

Principal