

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Schools Reclassify Discipline for E-Cigarettes

Haywood County, North Carolina – January 15, 2015

The use of electronic cigarettes and similar substance use devices has increased significantly across the country as people attempt to reduce their use of tobacco products. As a result of increased use, some students are beginning to bring these devices to school and use them at school. When the devices first began to appear in Haywood County Schools, they were treated as a violation of the tobacco use policy because the devices are designed to vaporize nicotine an addictive substance in tobacco. Under school district policy the discipline was previously coded as a facsimile of tobacco.

Beginning Tuesday, February 2, 2015, electronic cigarettes and similar substance use devices will be coded as possession or use (depending on the actual circumstances) of drug paraphernalia. Drug paraphernalia includes pipes, bongs and any other devices designed or employed to use drugs or other substances. This reclassification of discipline does not require a policy change since possession and use of drug paraphernalia are already included in school board policy. The discipline for possession and use of drug paraphernalia typically includes a suspension from school. The number of suspension days is dependent upon the circumstances, evidence and other investigative findings.

The administrative decision to reclassify this discipline came after a review of the current literature regarding the use of these devices and a discussion among high school and middle school principals regarding how the devices are being used. Unfortunately, there are numerous credible reports that young people are beginning to use e-cigarettes and similar substance use devices to smoke cannabis, hash oil and other illegal substances. This alarming development has gained the attention of law enforcement, health officials and school officials across the country.

The time between this press release and February 2, 2015 will be used to inform our students, parents and community about this discipline reclassification.

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