

Key Notes



Date: September 2018

RE: Cannabis In RVS

What We Know About Cannabis

- Regular cannabis use in adolescents is associated with experiencing psychotic symptoms (changes in thoughts, feelings and behaviours), especially when there is a family or personal history of psychotic disorders. Some studies have suggested that cannabis may also increase risk of anxiety and depression.
- Early and frequent cannabis use is linked with poor performance in school, lower grades and increased risk of dropping out. Some research suggests that early, regular, heavy and long-term use of cannabis by teens may impair their cognitive abilities and may not be fully reversible
- Youth might be particularly vulnerable to these negative outcomes due to the extensive changes that are taking place in the brain during adolescence, especially the ongoing development and maturation of the prefrontal cortex, which is critical to higher-order cognitive processes such as impulse control, working memory, planning, problem solving and emotional regulation.

How RVS is Preparing for the Legalization of Cannabis

- RVS is reviewing its current procedures to ensure they state that RVS clearly prohibits the possession and use of alcohol and drugs by all students, staff, and community members while on Board property, school buses, and while attending school and at Board-sponsored events. Staff and students that violate this procedure will be subject discipline as outlined in Administrative Procedure 350 Student Discipline or 410 Employee Progressive Discipline.
- As part of its Social Emotional Learning initiative, RVS also will be bringing awareness of the detrimental effects of cannabis among youth.

Where Can Teachers and Parents Find Help

- Parents are a child's best defense against drug use. The top two things that a parent or guardian can do is to be informed about drug issues and talk to your kids about drugs.
- Drug Free Kids Canada (DFK) has launched a national campaign aimed at helping parents learn how to talk to their kids about cannabis and its impact. <https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/>
- Other good resources are the Canadian Medical Association at <https://www.cma.ca/en/pages/cannabis-and-the-cma.aspx> and, for teachers, Alberta Health Services <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page2674.aspx>