

What to say to my children when we talk about/if they ask about:

Solvents



Be prepared:

You are a parent/carer, not a medical or legal expert. You aren't expected to know everything. It's OK to check things and look things up but remember, some online sites aren't reliable. Our family hub has some reliable and trusted sites with more information to help you:

Scan here

<https://link.lsec.uk/family-hub>



Pick the time and place. A calm, quiet place where you won't be overheard or interrupted is best.



The facts, useful information and how to word things:

Solvents can be found in everyday substances like petrol, paint, strong glue, spray paint, cleaning products, aerosols and deodorants.

Where possible, create airflow where these are used, and wear a mask if possible.

Oxygen and some asthma medicines are the only safe substances to breathe into our lungs.

It can be illegal to sell most substances containing solvents to under-18s.

Labels on containers, cans and bottles warn us of the risks: flammable (catches fire easily), irritant (burns/irritates the skin) or harmful.

Consider where substances containing solvents are stored in the house or garage. Store flammable liquids away from heat, on high shelves, out of reach of toddlers, or in locked cupboards.

Stop using the substance if you feel sick, dizzy or tired, or if you develop a headache.

Inhaling helium from balloons at parties may be funny as it makes your voice go high, but it also reduces the amount of oxygen in your lungs. There is a risk of fainting and falling.

Liquids like petrol and lighter fluid are highly flammable and shouldn't be used to start fires or BBQs.

What skills should you talk about as well?

Our approach is that children are best armed with accurate facts and information from the programmes used in school and what you discuss with them. Alongside this, they need strategies and skills to say No if they need to. Visit our Family Hub to find out and reinforce the strategies your children have been taught during the Life Skills Programme.

These include:

- Dealing with stress and peer pressure.
- Communicating clearly when saying No.
- The MATES resistance strategies.
- Considering risk and consequence within our SKILL decision-making model.

This guidance is designed to help you if your child is taking part in one of the Life Skills programmes at school. Its content relates to the topics covered in this programme. The school's PSHE scheme may include other topics.