**Legal Highs – Information Guide for Parents/Carers/Students**

‘Legal Highs’ are a drug which produce similar effects to illegal substances (substances when taken produce an altered state of mind). They are **NOT** controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (whereas regulated substances are).

The chemicals they contain have in most cases never been used in drugs for human consumption before. This means they haven't been tested to show that they are safe. Users can never be certain what they are taking and what the effects might be. Some Legal Highs come from plants and suppliers market them as being natural highs. Many suppliers use descriptions such as bath salts, incense or plant food and claim they are “not intended” for human consumption.

Legal Highs are generally bought from Internet sites, although there are shops that specialise in drug paraphernalia (known as head shops) Head shops sell equipment for smoking cannabis e.g. Pipes and larger than normal cigarette papers. Head shops often appeal to young people as they also sell clothing and magazines.

**Legal Highs are highly dangerous and carry serious health risks**;

* Increased risk if you combine alcohol with any legal or illegal substance that causes a high.
* Effects of legal highs can include reduced inhibitions, drowsiness, excited or paranoid states, coma, seizures and, in a few cases, death.
* Because the chemical ingredients in a branded product can be changed without you knowing, the risks are unpredictable.
* Even drugs that look similar or have similar names may be varying strengths and have different effects.

**Legal highs and the law**

Many drugs that were previously sold as legal highs are now controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act, including mephedrone (meow meow/mcat), naphyrone, BZP, GBL and synthetic cannabinoids (such as those found in Spice products). This means that they are illegal to possess or to supply to others.

The safest advice to give children is **NOT** to take them. If they do take anything and become unwell they need to seek help quickly to promote recovery by going to the [accident and emergency (A&E) department of your nearest hospital](http://www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories/Pages/ServiceSearch.aspx?ServiceType=AandE).

For further information and latest news on legal highs, go to the [FRANK website](http://www.talktofrank.com/latest). [www.talktofrank.com/drug/legal-highs](http://www.talktofrank.com/drug/legal-highs).