

Talbot Primary School

Talbot Drive

Wallisdown

Poole

BH12 5ED

01202 513981

[school@talbot.poole.sch.uk](mailto:school@talbot.poole.sch.uk)

[www.talbot.poole.sch.uk](http://www.talbot.poole.sch.uk)

Talbot Primary School Safeguarding newsletter      November 2023

Unfortunately, we have had to deal with some more issues outside of school relating to misuse of smartphones and social media.

Please can I remind you that none of the social media sites are suitable for primary school children.

You may wish to consider whether a smartphone is something that a primary school aged child requires. I am often told by parents that everyone has one and they don't want their child to miss out. I would question this logic and also question what it is they are missing out on as often the things they are missing, are things they should!

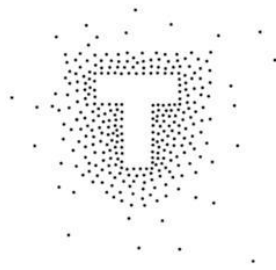
I know that many of you allow your children to use your own device to access age-appropriate content which you can monitor. This would seem a sensible approach.

I am concerned by the increasing number of our children who have access to their smartphones at all times, including when they go to bed. Please consider the risks involved in this approach.

We are seeing an increasing number of phones being brought into school, which sit in the office all day. Wherever possible please do not send phones into school.

Over the next few weeks I will share some information with you to help you make informed decisions over internet use and social media.

Many thanks Mr Ross Browne.



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This month it has become illegal to use Nitrous Oxide as a recreational drug. Please find an information sheet below that may answer any questions you have on this substance.

## Your guide to Nitrous Oxide



### Alternative names

Balloons, Chargers, Hippie Crack, Laughing Gas, NOS, NOZ, Whippits

### What is it?

Nitrous oxide is an odourless and colourless gas that is most commonly found in pressurised shiny looking metal canisters. Nitrous oxide has predominantly been sold in 8 gram single use cannisters. Larger canisters, which typically contain 600g or 2kg of gas, are now being sold, deliberately targeting non-legitimate use.

It is widely used today during childbirth when mixed with air (gas and air). Cannisters can be purchased (if over 18 years old) for making whipped cream.

For recreational use, nitrous oxide is usually inhaled from a balloon. The canisters are put in a 'cracker' or a whipped cream dispenser so the contents can be released into a balloon.

Some people say that the gas has a slightly sweet smell and taste.

### Effects on the body

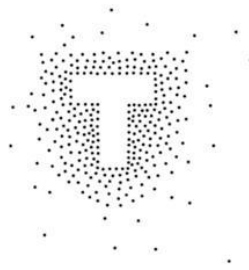
Nitrous oxide is a type of hallucinogen. It slows down your brain and your body's responses. The effects of the drug varies from person to person, depending on how much has been inhaled and what other drugs might have been taken. The effects are usually immediate and last for around 1-2 minutes on average.

Taking nitrous oxide can cause:

- feelings of euphoria, relaxation and calmness
- fits of giggles and laughter – hence the nickname 'laughing gas'
- sound distortions and hallucinations – when you see or hear things that aren't there
- give you a severe headache
- cause dizziness
- stop you thinking straight
- cause short-lived but intense feelings of paranoia

### The law

Nitrous oxide is currently covered by the Psychoactive Substances Act and is illegal to produce/supply for its psychoactive effect. The UK government has announced NOS will be categorised as a class C drug and made illegal by the end of 2023. People found in unlawful possession of NOS could face up to two years in prison or an unlimited fine, with up to 14 years for supply or production.



## Common risks

- Inhaling Nitrous Oxide directly from the canister is very dangerous because the gas is under such high pressure and it comes out as extremely cold. This can damage your throat and lungs, stop you breathing or slow your heart to a dangerous level.
- Inhaling nitrous oxide through a mask, respirator, via a bag over the head or in an enclosed space such as a car, runs the risk of asphyxia as the N2O displaces oxygen in a closed space.
- If you take too much nitrous oxide you risk falling unconscious and/or suffocating from the lack of oxygen. People have died this way. Dizziness, which might make you act carelessly or dangerously. It can be hard to judge the amount to use safely. Too much can make you faint, have an accident or worse.
- Heavy, regular use can lead to a B12 vitamin deficiency and lead to anaemia. Severe deficiency can lead to serious nerve damage, causing tingling and numbness in the fingers and toes. This can be very painful and make walking difficult. It can even lead to paralysis, and the damage may be lasting.
- Regular use can stop you forming white blood cells properly.
- Mixing with alcohol is especially dangerous. It can increase the risks associated with both substances and can lead to an increased risk of accidents. It will make the effects of other drugs stronger, particularly psychedelics.
- It is a short acting drug which can lead people to frequently re-dose and end up using more than they intended. Some people say that the gas has a slightly sweet smell and taste.

## Harm reduction advice

Always dispense the gas into a balloon.

After you've inhaled from a balloon a few times there won't be any Nitrous Oxide left and you're simply starving your brain of oxygen.

Sit down when you use Nitrous Oxide to avoid falls/accidents. Make sure you are in the right mindset and right environment.

### Support in the Dorset Council area

REACH  
Tel: 0800 043 4656  
Online referral - [pds.drugreferrals.com](http://pds.drugreferrals.com)  
Visit [www.edp.org.uk/reach](http://www.edp.org.uk/reach)

### Support in the BCP Council area

We Are With You  
Tel: 01202 558855  
Online referral - [pds.drugreferrals.com](http://pds.drugreferrals.com)  
[www.wearewithyou.org.uk](http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk)

**In an emergency call 999 and ask for an ambulance.**

The information in this briefing has been gathered from the following associations where further information can be found:

- FRANK
- Nitrous Oxide (N2O): An independent detailed briefing for professionals by Michael Linnell
- Bristol Drugs Project

