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Headteacher:  
Simon Hill BSc MA NPQH

SJH/JY

18<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Dear Parent/Carer

## Smoking

Darton High School wants its students to be healthy as well as happy and hard working. We know that this is something that you want too.

Smoking is one way that young people can damage their health. Because of that we warn our students of the dangers of smoking, we support those who want to give it up and we have a zero tolerance for any student caught smoking.

We feel that we need to stop any students who smoke for their sake and for the sake of everyone else.

Therefore we are increasing our efforts to ensure students do not smoke anywhere on school premises or on school buses. The latter is important not solely because it is illegal, but also because it inevitably leads to other students' clothing smelling of smoke as well as the obvious health hazards of passive smoking.

What we are doing about smoking:

- Clearly marking as out-of-bounds all possible smoking 'corners' in school grounds;
- Telling all students in assemblies that anyone caught in those out-of-bounds areas will be assumed to be smoking as there is no good reason to be there;
- Anyone caught in an out-of-bounds area will have a detention within 48 hours. We will also write to you to inform you;
- Anyone caught smoking on a bus will be banned from using any school bus for at least a week. Again we will write to you to inform you.

What we'd like you to do:

- Talk to your son/daughter about smoking. Ensure they know that you support what the school is doing;
- If we write to you to inform you that your son/daughter has been caught smoking, reinforce the school's sanctions with your own if possible;
- Report all incidents of smoking on buses to the school. This can be done by a brief e-mail to Mr Sinton ([d.sinton1@barnsley.org](mailto:d.sinton1@barnsley.org)), who is leading this initiative. The names of those students who were smoking will be used in absolute confidence. We do not want your son/daughter to have problems as a consequence of giving us the culprits' names.



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## **The Daily Express article on smoking and twilights**

You might have read last week's Express article on smoking. It mixed up some things that are correct with some complete nonsense. It started by describing an actual Barnsley Primary Care Trust initiative

to prescribe nicotine patches to smokers under the age of sixteen when they want to quit. This is correct. This is happening in Barnsley. To me it sounds a good thing, although I have no idea if any Darton High School students are involved. I've never seen one of our students with a nicotine patch.

It then mixed that factual reporting up with an inaccurate description of Darton High School's Twilight Programme. What was reported was not correct and, to ensure you have the full picture, I describe the details of the programme below. It also implied we condone smoking, which is clearly not true, and never has been.

### **Twilights at Darton High School**

As headteacher of Darton High School I am committed to every one of our students learning. To learn effectively you need lessons and a school where students behave. Poor behaviour is not only anti-social; it also interferes with the learning of others. We cannot tolerate that.

Our Twilight Programme is designed for the very small number of students who have not responded well to our normal efforts to get them to behave. It is designed to protect the hard-working majority from disruption and to encourage the poorly-behaved minority to improve their attitude to school.

The parents/carers of these selected students are written to and invited into school to discuss the school's concerns. The outcome for such a student is that they are put on the programme for an initial two-week period. Each student has a personalised timetable. It might require a student to arrive at school at lunchtime, take their lessons in our Inclusion Area (i.e. not with their normal classes) and continue beyond the end of the school day into the 'twilight session'. It is not negotiated. We determine what lessons they are taking.

If a student improves their behaviour they are slowly re-integrated into their regular classes. The hoped-for outcome is that the boys or girls involved are better able to behave appropriately and understand the consequences of poor behaviour.

This programme has been running since September 2008 and therefore we are now in a position to state that this has achieved two things:

1. Improved behaviour in normal lessons around school;
2. Improved behaviour of individual students who have gone through the Twilight Programme and 'come out the other side' with a better attitude to school and learning in general.

### **Finally ....**

As always, I invite you to get in touch with me if you have any comments or questions about the content of this letter or any other matter. You can write to me at school or drop me an e-mail ([s.hill@barnsley.org](mailto:s.hill@barnsley.org)). At Darton High School we are committed to keeping improving. We want this school to offer the best education possible for all the young people within the community.

With best wishes.

Yours faithfully,



**Simon Hill**  
**Headteacher**