

BROCKWOOD PARK SCHOOL



OPEN LETTER 2010-2011

Dear Student,

None of us is an island, as the English poet John Donne put it. Life is relationship and we are always in relationship: with people, ideas, objects and nature. Our actions and reactions, our beliefs and desires have an impact on those around us. Whilst we can never be free of relationship we must ask the question if it is possible to be free in relationship?

At Brockwood there are around 100 people from more than 25 different countries living closely together and so the School is a microcosm of the world. We have an excellent opportunity to learn about ourselves and others and to understand the problems and challenges that constantly arise in living together. The education Brockwood offers is intended to awaken in both the student and the educator a capacity to take responsibility for relationship and to discover ways of living together that are creative and harmonious.

In order to do this, the School must be a place where students feel secure and cared for, where there is consideration and respect for each other and where there is encouragement to make good use of time and energy. In creating this atmosphere together, we see the need for shared agreements that will support the ethos of the School and reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding and conflict. These agreements make demands on us all and place restrictions on behaviour; however each agreement exists for a reason, and we feel that they are realistic and not unreasonable.

At Brockwood we are concerned with the question of freedom: freedom does not come from being able to do 'exactly what you want, when you want', for this is often a passing desire, or an action that takes no account of the well-being of yourself, others, or the place you are in. Freedom requires responsibility and order, and without these it becomes anarchy. Freedom emerges as we come to better understand ourselves and others, and begin to go beyond our own limitations and those that can arise in relationship.

The School Agreements endeavour to support this learning, so please read them carefully. They do not cover all aspects of Brockwood life, but refer to many of the more central or controversial ones. They are not meant to be a substitute for your own common-sense, consideration and intelligence. All of those are necessary too! The agreements also apply on weekends, unless students are in their parents' care.

The Rhythm of the Day

- **The School Day starts at 8.00am, or such later or earlier time as agreed, with Morning Meeting, which you are expected to attend, unless otherwise agreed.**

We value self-reflection and moments of quiet at Brockwood and we feel starting the day together in this manner helps to contribute to the overall atmosphere in the School.

- **The School is quiet enough for sleeping by 9.30pm and you must be in your room at 10.00pm (11.00pm on Monday and Tuesday), and not out of your room – without the**

permission of a staff member – after that time. Male and female students should leave each other's rooms one hour before 10.00pm (or before 11.00pm on Monday and Tuesday) and not visit each other's rooms before breakfast.

As the school day is very busy with many social interactions, it is important for students to have some quiet time at the end of the day, to get adequate sleep and to establish a rhythm for the working week. The School also has a 'duty of care' which requires that we know you are safe and secure after nightfall.

Vegetarian Diet

- **You must maintain a vegetarian diet during term time.**

The School adopts a vegetarian diet out of a general respect for living things and in keeping with the wishes of the founder.

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

- **The use of alcohol and illegal drugs is incompatible with the School's lifestyle and is considered a serious offence here. It is very likely that if you bring in, or use, alcohol or illegal drugs at Brockwood you will be expelled or suspended.**

At Brockwood we wish to encourage good health and clear thinking and the use of these substances does not support these aims. We feel that the School offers you a lifestyle that is in many ways more free, open and enjoyable than many other Schools. If you would like a different lifestyle you are free to find one elsewhere.

Smoking

- **Smoking is not allowed.**

Smoking is habit-forming and poses a serious risk to health. We cannot tolerate smoking at Brockwood.

Sexual Relationships

- **You must not engage in sexual intercourse or inappropriate sexual activity whilst at Brockwood. We discourage exclusive relationships that cause you to be unavailable socially to the rest of the community.**

Learning about sexuality is an important part of your education, but modern society gives undue emphasis to sex and as a teenager we would like you to meet this pressure intelligently, questioning and considering the issues carefully; otherwise, you are likely to be caught or hurt by them. We feel that full sexual intimacy at too early an age is not conducive to the well-being of a young person and that in the context of a boarding school it has a detrimental impact on one's studies and one's relationships with fellow students and staff. We do not say that sexual activity is 'wrong' but that it is wholly inappropriate for a school with Brockwood's intentions and responsibilities

Appearance

The dress code at Brockwood is 'tidy casual'. Brockwood is a place of work, as well as a home to all of us; therefore we ask that the following guidelines for appearance be respected:

- **No torn or dirty clothing;**
- **Sexually provocative clothing is inappropriate;**
- **Hats not to be worn in the dining-room, in school assemblies or in classes;**
- **No body-piercing, apart from pierced ears, and a discreet piercing on the side of the nose;**
- **Hair kept clean and tied back when necessary e.g. in the kitchen, woodwork shop, laboratory;**

- **Hair only dyed a natural colour.**

Clothing has an impact on the way we feel about ourselves and how others see us. Within the context of the School, we question fashions and appearance that are intended to shock, and to draw undue attention to oneself. We ask for a certain standard of dress and personal appearance because we feel this gives due emphasis to order, cleanliness and respect, thereby contributing to a sense of wellbeing and the overall atmosphere in the School.

Passive Forms of Entertainment

Passive entertainment has become one of the biggest obstacles to students developing good study habits. In order to support a studious atmosphere in the School and to encourage students to make good use of time and energy, we have decided on the following:

- **Televisions and Gameboys may not be brought to Brockwood. We do not encourage students to bring personal computers or laptops, though exceptions may be made by the Director or Deputy Director, usually in the case of students in the second year of their AS/A Level studies and for those who have been assessed with learning difficulties. Since September 2005 we have been asking students to arrange for insurance of laptops.**
- **Portable music systems (ipods, walkmans, discmans, MP3 players etc) may not be used within the School in any of the public spaces. Stereos in rooms must be kept at a low volume or used with headphones.**

The School has computers linked to the internet for student use and television, videos and DVDs can be viewed on weekends in the School. The use of personal music systems throughout the day is another form of passive entertainment that causes you to 'withdraw' from your surroundings. One person's 'music' is another person's 'noise', so stereos must always be played in such a way as not to disturb others.

Hitchhiking

- **Hitchhiking is not allowed.**

This is not considered safe within the UK.

Sanctions at Brockwood

We hope that you will abide by the School Agreements because you understand the need for them. If you break agreements there are consequences, which may include one, or more, of the following:

Changes made to your Programme or Environment

The aim is to help you to change your attitude or behaviour through action and understanding. This may involve, for example:

- a change in courses taken; seeing a counsellor; a change in bedroom; a restriction of access to certain rooms (such as the Computer Room) or to certain areas (such as the Wings); a requirement to contribute more to school life through a project or activity;
- suspension from the School for a period of time during which you are encouraged to reflect on what has happened, to discuss this with your parents/ guardian and to write to the School.

Expulsion

It is very likely that you will be suspended or expelled if:

- you bring in, or use, alcohol and illegal drugs at Brockwood
- you are unable to live by the School Agreements and do not respond to the steps mentioned above;
- your behaviour is such that staff feel they can no longer trust you in the School, or take responsibility for your being here. This usually occurs after a serious incident, if you are believed to be a risk to others or yourself, or because of a serious breach of English law.

The purpose of preparing the Open Letter (Agreements) is to help you know what will be expected of you whilst living at Brockwood. Please consider it carefully, and ask us to clarify any doubts you may have so that we can begin the year together.

Bill Taylor
Co-Principal

Adrian Sydenham
Co-Principal

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THE SCHOOL AGREEMENTS

I have read, understood and will comply with the agreements.

Date :

Name of Parent or Guardian :

Signature of Parent or Guardian :

Name of Student :

Signature of Student :

***If parents or students wish to add any comments concerning the Agreements, please do so on a separate sheet of paper. Before travelling to Brockwood, return this signed slip to:
The Admissions Officer, Brockwood Park School, Bramdean, Hants, SO24 0LQ, UK.***