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Dear Parents/Guardians:

We want to inform you about the recent trend of electronic smoking devices being used by middle and high school students. Electronic smoking devices, also referred to as e-cigarettes or hookah pens, are delivery systems designed to mimic smoking a cigarette. These devices are increasingly finding their way into the pockets, and backpacks of students across our campuses. The devices are marketed with flavored oils to target teenagers because they do not have to be 18 years of age to buy it (not a tobacco purchase). They are easily ordered online and can be found at smoke shops.

A number of different substances can be used in the device from flavored oil and nicotine to marijuana or crack cocaine and they all produce an odorless vapor that resembles smoke. Because the devices don't produce a flame, a person smoking marijuana or any other illegal substance in an electronic smoking device can take a puff and then quickly put it in a pocket.

School and Local law enforcement officials and drug counselors are concerned about the trend, particularly in minors. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a survey that showed use of electronic smoking devices among middle and high schools students doubled from 2011 to 2012. The CDC found 10 percent of high school students had tried an electronic smoking device within the last year.

Starting in the 2014-2015 school year, all electronic smoking devices will be classified as a violation of the Northshore School District Drug and Alcohol policy as stated in the District's Rights and Responsibilities Student Handbook, (p.5). We want the school community to know that bringing electronic smoking devices on campus is strictly prohibited and is a violation of "look-alike" drugs or drug paraphernalia. Accordingly, students may not solicit, use, or possess on their persons or in their vehicles electronic smoking devices, any other nicotine or smoking devices, or related products. These items may be considered look-alike drugs and drug paraphernalia and will be handled in the same way as our drug and alcohol violations out lined on (p.5). Specific to this type of violation is a long-term suspension.

This is a learning process for all of us. It is very important that you and your child are fully informed regarding standards related to appropriate behavior for a safe and productive school year. We appreciate your support in adhering to these policies. If throughout the course of the year you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

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