



Student Rules Then and Now

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While attending a program entitled “Early American Schoolhouses” at the Brick Academy in Basking Ridge, New Jersey, the instructor passed out handouts that discussed rules for students, teachers, and punishments in 1872. Meg Wastie, program coordinator at the Museum of Early Trades and Crafts in Madison and a former teacher, presented a great program overview of the [Museum of Early Trades and Crafts](#).

Student Rules - 1872



Student Rules Today

After the session, I was curious as to what some of the rules are today for those attending high school. Checking out the local high school website, I found a set of rules for students in the student handbook. In addition to reading the rules, I think that students are asked to sign some kind of contract that they agree to abide by the rules, and that the parents are also required to sign off as well.

While back in 1872 there was one page of rules, I was surprised to find the 2009 conduct handbook was 40 pages. One thing to notice is that many of the rules today are actually New Jersey state legislation, so they'd be more like laws than rules, right?



2009 Student Rules Handbook

Cell Phone Policy

Students are permitted to bring a cell phone to school for use before or after school hours. Cell phones must be turned off from 7:35 AM to 2:25 PM.

Cards and Dice Policy

Playing cards and dice games are not permitted in school at any time.

Dress Code

In accordance with the Character Education initiative in Bernards Township, Ridge High School students are expected to dress in a modest manner that is appropriate for school and in accordance with standards of good taste. DRESS CANNOT BE DISRUPTIVE TO THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT. Beach and casual attire such as short shorts, halter-tops tube tops, low-cut tops, spaghetti straps and bare midriffs are examples of inappropriate dress for school. Sleeveless tops, including "muscle shirts" are prohibited for boys. Underwear that is visible (including bra straps) is always inappropriate. Culottes and shorts are acceptable if they are of appropriate length. Mini-skirts, dresses and shorts must not be extreme. Length of dresses, skirts and shorts must be as long as the end of fingertips when arms are resting at side. State law requires that shoes be worn at all times. Any attire that references alcohol, drugs or gambling in any manner or which contain phrases and/or symbols capable of misinterpretation or multiple interpretations are never permitted to be worn. Students wearing such attire will be asked to leave the school building until they are appropriately attired and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Experiments Involving Animals

Legislation now permits public school students to choose not to participate in certain experiments involving animals. Public school pupils from kindergarten through grade 12 may refuse to dissect, vivisect, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals or any parts thereof as part of a course of instruction.

Disciplinary Measures - Bus

Satisfactory behavior is expected of students who ride buses.

"The driver shall be in full charge of the school bus at all times and shall be responsible for maintaining order. A bus driver may not exclude a pupil from the bus, but if unable to manage a pupil, shall report the unmanageable pupil to the principal of the school he/she attends." (Title 18A:25-2)

"A pupil may be excluded from the bus for disciplinary reasons by the principal and his parent/guardian shall provide for his transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion." (Title 18A:25-2)

Students whose repeated actions have caused safety and welfare concerns on the bus are subject to disciplinary measures. Drivers shall report in writing to the building principal any unsatisfactory behavior on the bus. Depending on the severity of the behavior, the building principal shall take the following steps:

- conference with the student and warning given
- written notification to the parents/guardians
- after school detention
- suspension of bus privileges
- in-school or out-of-school suspension



Fliers and Posters

No fliers other than student election information are to be distributed by hand. Administrative approval for displaying fliers or posters is required.

Hall Passes

All students must have a hall pass from their teacher to leave class.

Home Instruction

Students are entitled to home instruction in cases where confinement by a physician and absence from school IS EXPECTED TO BE FIVE SCHOOL DAYS OR MORE. In Bernards Township, all home instruction programs are coordinated by the Director of Pupil Personnel with the assistance of the school nurse, guidance counselors, and child study team staff.

Homework During Religious Holidays

It is therefore the policy of the Board to permit students an excused absence for observance of a religious holiday.

Late to Class

An unexcused late to class in excess of 10 minutes shall be recorded as a chargeable absence. An unauthorized late to class in excess of ten minutes shall be recorded as a cut in the class.

Medication

All pupil medications shall be appropriately maintained and secured by the school nurse, except those medications to be self-administered by pupils.

Music Devices

Students are not permitted to use a music device during class. Students may listen to a music device, with headphones, during study hall and lunches.

Nuisance Items

Any object that may be considered educationally inappropriate or distracting should not be brought to school by students. These objects may be confiscated.

Nutrition Statement

The following items may not be served, sold, or given out as free promotion anywhere on elementary or middle school property at any time before the end of the school day:

- Foods of minimal nutritional value
- All food and beverage items listing sugar, in any form, as the first ingredient, and
- All forms of candy.



Parking

Parking spots are for **SENIORS ONLY**. Each parking spot will be shared by two seniors for the 2009-2010 school year.

Search and Seizure

School lockers remain the property of the district even when used by pupils. Lockers are subject to administrative search in the interests of school safety, sanitation, discipline, enforcement of school regulations and to search by law enforcement officials on presentation of a proper warrant.

Sexual Harassment is prohibited. It is defined as, “unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature”.

Skateboarding

Skateboarding is not allowed on school grounds.

Smoking

SMOKING AND/OR POSSESSION OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS ARE PROHIBITED IN SCHOOL AND ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

Smoking is prohibited on school property by Board Policy 7434, State Statute, and Local Ordinance 1171. First Offense: 1 Saturday detention and a recommendation to enroll in a Smoking Cessation Program and confiscation of the product.

Working Papers

All students under 18 years of age must obtain working certificates if they wish to work after school hours or on vacations. Working papers may be obtained in the Guidance Office.

Athletic Spectator Conduct

- No smoking in the school or outside
- No liquid refreshment in gym
- No consumption of alcoholic beverages on school premises
- No mechanical noise makers
- No whistling – it interferes with officials
- Cheer your team on in a positive manner
- Display good sportsmanship at all times
- No signs are permitted at Athletic Contests

The attendance procedures are presented below:

Absences of 12 days in a course each semester of the school year (6 days in a PE or Health class per quarter) may result in a loss of credit and the recording of the grade WA (Withdrawn Absent) unless an extension is granted upon appeal.

When Would You Prefer to Be a Student?

So, what time period is more strict? 1872 when it was a one pager, or 2009 with the 40 pages? After thinking



about it, I'm not sure. Are these rules attempting to parent our kids? Perhaps it's because the schools have to mandate common courtesies and proper social behaviors? Or maybe there's been so many problems with litigating religious and constitutional freedoms, that the system's forced to do it. Fee free to post your thoughts.

More Jersey Local History

[Mapping New Jersey's Historic Schoolhouses](#)

[The Annins of Liberty Corner: Patriots, Flag Company and a Middle School](#)

[MLH Honors Back to School with Historic School Images From the Somerset Hills](#)

[The World's Largest Glitter Factory Started in Bernardsville, New Jersey](#)