

Rules are here for a reason

by Abby Burton

As unnecessary and extreme as some rules may seem, they are created and enforced for a reason.

Although many students may believe that the regulations at New Trier are put in place to make our lives harder, this is not the case. They are put in place so that the student body and faculty have structure.

Think about it. If there were no rules, how could people decipher between what is right and what is wrong? This school would be a nuthouse. People could be stealing from lockers or even destroying school property. Who knows?

Let's take the sexting scandal for example. I'm sure that the students who sent these graphic images had no understanding of the extent to which their actions would affect others.

Obviously, these students also didn't plan on having their phones searched at school or getting suspended, but this was ultimately necessary to teach them how to act responsibly.

Many students believe that what they do on their individual iPads, especially during school, should be kept private because they have "rights."

However, rights are limited during school hours. Anything you do on your phone or iPad under the school WiFi can be accessed by administrators.

Keeping this in mind, the students involved in the sexting scandal should have been more aware.

I've heard two sides to this case, though. Some said that it was unfair for administrators to confiscate students' phones and participate in a full search for harmful material.

Others said that the search and suspension of these students was beneficial because students now have a better understanding of what is considered a violation of school policy.

I have to agree with the second opinion because without administrators having the right to investigate by examining the electronics that students bring into school, the sexting scandal

could have turned out much worse.

With no punishment, students would have continued to send the pictures around, causing more issues within the school.

Our freedom of speech is also somewhat limited in a school environment. Of course, classes encourage having different opinions, but if these ideas or words come off as offensive or disrespectful in any way, a trip to the adviser chair and an appropriate consequence would not be surprising.

I've seen cases where students from all over the country have tried to justify their disruptive words by saying that it falls under their right to freedom of speech.

The Supreme court case *Morse v. Frederick* marked a precedent for the limit of the right of freedom in school settings. In this case, the phrase "Bong hits 4 Jesus" was being questioned. Ultimately, the court held that threatening words that cause issues within a school environment are not acceptable.

This, I think, is completely understandable. Even in my classes, I have heard people come off as very disrespectful towards their teachers by using offensive words.

As expected, these students have been sent to the adviser chair and were reprimanded based on the extent of disruption they caused.

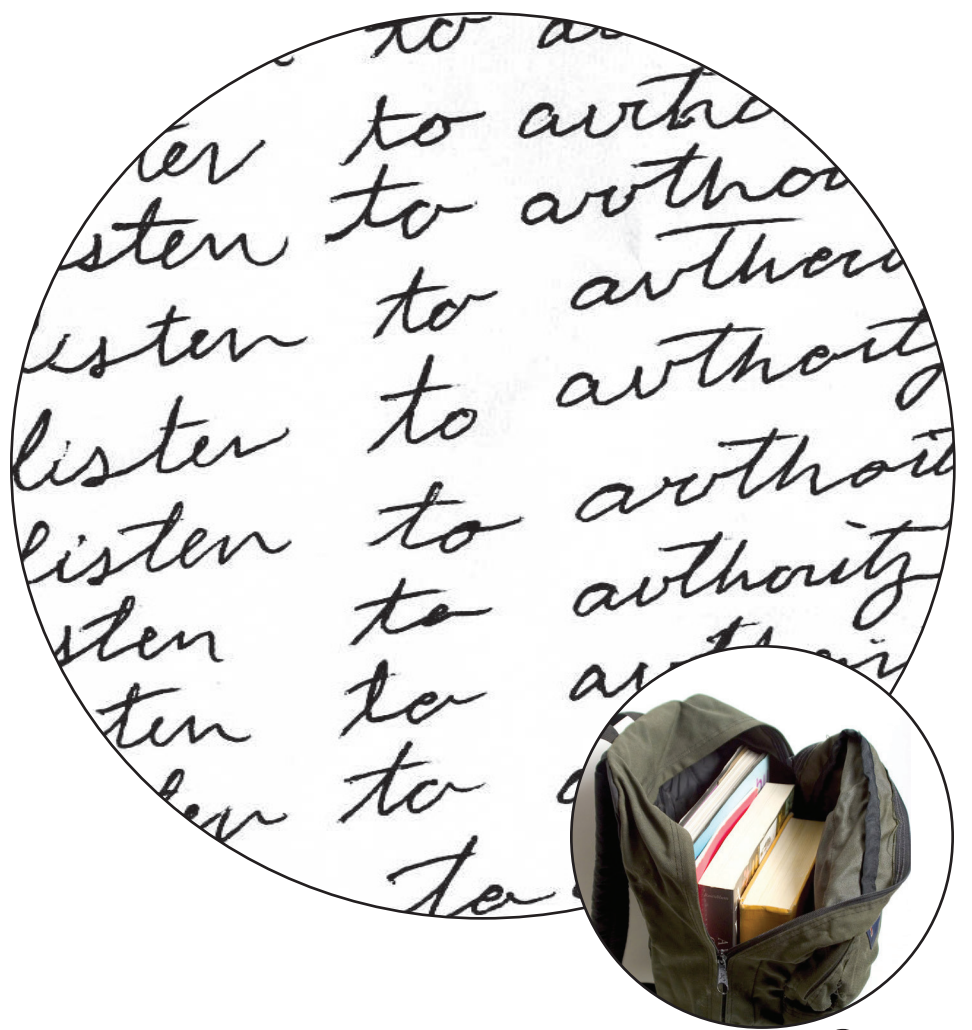
Although some still try to fight this limit of rights, rude actions can affect everyone. They challenge the teachers' power and they are distracting students from a focused environment.

The amount of rights that students have in school only contributes to better school setting.

With too many rules, students may be put under an unhealthy amount of pressure and possibly feel obligated to rebel. On the other side, too many rights could cause pure chaos.

New Trier has found a healthy balance between letting students have freedom, but also restricting them from doing certain things.

To all who fight against the school system for their "unnecessary" regulations: it's not worth it. They are set for a reason, and that is to keep our school running smoothly.



It all comes down to safety

by Leah Pearlman

To properly and adequately prepare teenagers for the world beyond high school, students *should* be given more rights in school.

It is an unarguable truth that students have little of their guaranteed constitutional rights the second they step through the doors of their school.

Is it not the point of high school to ready teens for the real world where the constitution is solidly upheld?

This being said, students in public schools are not completely stripped of their rights.

Let me preface my opinion with some legal background information.

The Supreme Court ruled in *Board v. Barnette* in 1943 that students did not have to stand or recite the Pledge of Allegiance against their will.

During the Vietnam War, students wore black arm bands to school to protest and were forced to take them off. In *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969) the Supreme Court ruled that the students could not be forced to remove the arm bands. These two famous cases set precedents regarding students' rights.

I applaud these decisions by the court, as both cases established the right to certain personal freedoms. The Supreme Court, in this realm, has recognized the importance of giving future leaders the ability to take action based on their beliefs.

Generally speaking, the Constitution applies equally to everyone, regardless of age, color, race, religion or other factors. However, the rights of free speech, free press, free association, and freedom from unwarranted search and seizure are areas of dispute between students attending school and their administrators.

One of the reasons violations of student's rights are upheld by the courts is because *in loco parentis*. This Latin phrase means that while a student is in school, the school can and should act as a parent.

Imagine the strictest parents you know. This is the way the school must make decisions to accommodate the views of every parent. This is a means to keeping a safe environment for everyone.

Another reason why we have fewer rights in the school can be understood after looking at the goal of school: to educate. If a student interferes with the educational process, they may be suppressed.

Take another example, *New Jersey v. TLO* (1985). In this case, a teacher discovered a 14-year-old freshman smoking cigarettes in the bathroom. In response to the Assistant Principal's questioning, the girl denied that she had been smoking and claimed that she did not

smoke at all.

The Assistant Vice Principal demanded to see her purse. Upon opening the purse, he found a pack of cigarettes, marijuana, a pipe, plastic bags, money, and an index card containing a list of students who owed the girl money. The New Jersey courts believed there to be a violation of the fourth amendment rights, which prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures and requires any warrant to be judicially sanctioned and supported by probable cause.

However, when the case was sent to the Supreme Court it was ruled that the search was a reasonable one as there was probable cause. The Supreme Court also stated that each state has a duty to provide a safe school environment.

Outside of school we have our rights, yet after subtracting the time we sleep and time we are at school, there is little open time to use them.

With the majority of our time spent in school, we should be able to use our rights. Without the ability to take advantage of these rights during a major part of our lives, we will grow up without the experience of ever using them, making decisions, or having opposing opinions. I don't want to live in a world of mindless drones working for "the man" and kowtowing to everyone.

So here is where my confusion lies, teachers want to keep us safe while teaching us to also question boundaries. We learn all about Martin Luther King and Susan B. Anthony-how their resilience and willingness to stand up for what they believed in at all costs was so honorable and brave. Yet, once seniors are told to put away our tutus on the last day of school, we must obey, unquestioningly.

Schools are stuck in a contradiction. They want to teach students to stand up for what they believe to be right and moral by taking action through being mindful of their rights and using them in an educated way.

However, they cannot preach these lessons very loudly before being stifled by a reality that they must ask students to listen to their authority and the rules set in place. As we complain about silly rules, for example don't leave the campus in a car during school hours, we must continuously remember the reasoning behind them. Schools are required to keep us safe.

Since the approximate 4000 students at New Trier outnumber the estimated 700 staff, it is out of even more necessity that the rules are stricter and narrower than they are at other schools.

You are only held to any of these rules if you are doing something wrong. Let's just say if you do break a rule, don't be stupid and get caught. And if you do get caught, why not bring it to the Supreme Court?



"Know the rules well, so you can break them effectively."
- Dalai Lama XIV

