

# Leaving campus: a clear dividing line

by Madison McVey

Rules regarding leaving and entering school revolve around one idea- safety.

Parents and guardians expect the school to be responsible for every student's well-being, and control them within the schools boundaries.

Senior Girls Adviser Chair Stephanie Gamauf is well aware of this. "As a parent, sending your child to school means that you're trusting your most prized possession with the school," she said.

In order to leave school, a student must have a note explaining why they're leaving, signed by their parent and adviser. This note must then be brought to the attendance office and traded for a pink slip, excusing your absence.

Another way a student can leave campus is if their ID is punched. In order for this to happen, a student's parent must come into school and request a form to allow their student to walk off campus during their lunch period.

Only for periods 4, 5, or 6. If a student has a lunch period 4th and a free period 5th, they must return to school by the end of 4th period.

Entering cars is strictly prohibited during the school day unless you have a note to leave, or if your last periods of the day are free periods, which allows your day



It is getting increasingly difficult for students to leave school freely | Minturn

to end earlier if you leave school and don't return.

"Consequences can range from truancies, to Saturday School, and even to suspension if you're caught in a car without a note to leave. "It is completely a student safety issue," said Gamauf.

New Trier Security Staff Member Johnny Owens said, "There is a red car that patrols around, and if they see a kid without a pink slip

from the attendance office, then they know they can't leave. Watch out for the red car, it'll come and get you."

Students tend to want to leave school when they have multiple free periods in a row. A senior who wishes to remain anonymous said, "it's nice to be able to do something you want during a free period, but I never skip class to leave school. I think the rules are too strict because if you have more than one free period consecutively,

then you should be allowed to go home or get food somewhere."

Owens admitted that he checks at least 15 to 20 student IDs a period when students choose to leave the building. However, the same anonymous students said "I don't have my student ID punched to let me leave and security never checks it, but on average, I leave school three to four times a month during my free periods to drive and get Starbucks."

Junior Boys Adviser Chair Gregory Segó said, "We define off campus as 'stepping off the curb.' Part of the reason for all that is when a student is in school, which is normally 8:15-3:25; we are serving as their parents and need to know their whereabouts."

"There are certainly academic things students can be doing during their free periods that aren't lunch, and we want to encourage our students to do that," said Segó.

No New Trier staff member can be certain that a student walking off campus does not get into a vehicle, but it is clearly stated at the beginning of the year in the student expectations and guidelines handbook.

Segó said, "We view students who enter a vehicle during the school day as an extremely serious

consequence, which can range from a one day suspension or in school detention."

"Normally we will call their parents in and have a meeting with them and the student just about why it's against our policy, and have them understand better behavior and decision making," said Segó.

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-Gregory Segó

Each different situation comes with its own evaluated consequence.

"We can work with students to appeal to their better interests, but in the end we cannot guarantee if a student is in a vehicle or not," said Segó.

## The administration's insight on student rights

by Sarah Wong

The New Trier administration is responsible for deciding how to set up and enforce school policies, and shaping student behavior.

Administrators are able to take case-by-case disciplinary actions toward violations of the rules because administrators can take closer rule violations on a case by case basis.

Shaping student behavior is not just about doling out punishments, according to Principal Denise Dubravec said, "Our goal is to help students grow into responsible adults, while ready to face tough decisions independently."

Although some policies have set consequences, such as rules regarding mobile devices, going off campus, or being in a car during the school day, others, like the recent violation of extracurricular code, require discussion before allotting discipline.

Assistant Principal for Administrative Services Scott Williams said, "New Trier is not a zero-tolerance school...if there's room for teaching or education, we definitely want that to be there."

The advisory system is an extension of the same principle of regulation. While prompt arrival to advisory needs to be enforced, the adviser may have reason to allow flexibility to individual students.

According to Williams, the school has this ability to be flexible and individualize the consequences for a student's particular situation because New Trier students are generally well-behaved. Still, students do break the rules. At the beginning of each school year, students are required to initial and sign the Student Acknowledgement of School Policies form in advisory,



Senior Hannah Higgins talking with security guard Julie Taylor | Minturn

which outlines rules like the dress code, mobile device regulations, and prearranged absences.

The students are also provided with a Guidebook, which lists all rules and their consequences.

Even with this information available, many students can be unfamiliar with the policies.

Senior Leah Berman said, "The school makes the rules available to us through the website. Ideally, students will have read them before an incident occurs, but most do not." It is debated whether students actually know their rights.

Senior Daniel Wilensky said, "The school does not the students aware of their rights about technology. During the iPad orientation, they do not let the students know everything is monitored and that administrators can confiscate anyone's mobile devices."

Williams noted that there is room for interpretation in the policies such as the dress code. This allows flexibility, instead of simply regulating an exact length of straps or shorts. However, the description "dress that may be construed as

revealing or provocative" is vague and subjective.

Williams said the administration may employ assemblies in the future to clarify some of these unclear rules.

Current regulations seem to be sufficient, but school policy, surprisingly, is not the largest influence of students' actions. Dubravec said, "I don't think making more specific rules will always change behaviors."

Williams informed that the statistics on the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance surveys, collected from New Trier students in Kinetic Wellness classes, confirm that the knowledge of consequences was not the greatest deterrent for poor behavior.

Instead, rules set by parents held the most influence over students. In preventing violations in the future, school administrators may have to work more closely with parents to enforce these rules and teach students how to conduct themselves reasonably and responsibly.

## Hazing policies at NT

by Nick Krauskopf and Joey Schuman

In the New Trier Guidebook, hazing is defined as harassing, intimidating conduct, or bullying, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that affects the tangible benefits of education, that unreasonably interferes with a student's educational performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

New Trier policy also states that no school club or sports team can meet officially without the presence of a coach or club sponsor. While met with disdain from some students, it is widely accepted that this is done to prevent a possible hazing or initiation situation, especially in light of notable recent hazing incidents at high schools across the country.

Sayreville High School, in Sayreville, New Jersey launched an investigation in October into hazing incidents that resulted in the cancellation of its 2014 football season. Also, in October of 2012, six members of the boys soccer team at Maine West High School in Des Plaines, IL, were charged with misdemeanor and battery because of hazing.

Each year New Trier emphasizes its zero tolerance policy for hazing. According to athletic director Randy Oberembt, administration meets with coaches, athletes, and families of athletes annually and seasonally, in addition to distributing the Extracurricular Code and student handbook that contains the official hazing policy.

"The reality is that any activity in which new members of a program, or new members of a team, are welcomed, should be under the scrutiny of the coaching staff," said Oberembt.

This policy has proven effective for Scott Fricke, boys basketball coach and Tri-Ship sponsor, who claimed to have "never heard of or dealt with a hazing incident at New

Trier."

"It's important to remember that we, meaning the coaching staff, educators, and also team members, have a responsibility to protect the social, emotional, and physical safety of everybody in the program," said Oberembt. "And clearly, if you're going to have an activity that welcomes students, it has to meet those standards, and if it fails to meet one of them, then it should not be conducted."

Fricke said, "I feel it is important to talk about expectations at the beginning of the season/year. It is important in both my classrooms and on my teams students are treating each other with courtesy and respect. Both sports and clubs have code of conduct rules that are explained to the students."

While New Trier has a set code on the hazing policy, some sports, such as swimming, have more specific rules. New Trier Swim Club (NTSC) has its own code of conduct, including rules on hazing. Consequences for sports such as swimming can be more severe and more specific on what is considered hazing.

For all New Trier sports, however, the approach towards "initiation" remains constant. Common activities in past years such as "kidnapping" new teammates and "TP-ing" houses are no longer allowed.

"Initiation is not a word that's acceptable," said Oberembt. "Words are powerful. What we've gone to is the use of the word 'welcoming.' Our coaches are obligated to understand the nature of the activity."

While these are harmful acts, many times it is out of the hands of New Trier. Still, today many teams will playfully 'kidnap' underclassmen to school or different initiation, but with the rule that no team can meet without a coach or sponsor, many New Trier teams have stopped doing these playful activities in fear of getting in trouble with the New Trier Administration.