



The High School View

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Some cry fair, some foul about new tardy policy

By EmmaJean Holley

The high school's new tardy policy has received mixed reviews from both students and faculty.

"It's definitely too strict. I don't think people should be punished this much for being late," said senior Peter Keaney. "It shouldn't keep kids off of Honor Roll either. If your grades are that strong, obviously you're the kind of student who can handle being late a few times."

The new policy states that each unexcused tardy marks the student down five behavior points. The fourth and fifth offenses earn detention, the sixth tardy gains an in-school suspension, and the seventh and eighth result in an out-of-school suspension. This is a significant change from last year's policy, which was based on implementing Saturday school as the next level of penalty following detention. The system, however, was not effective in enforcing rules of attendance. This was the primary motivation for the new disciplinary movement established this year.

"Last year, our biggest overall problem with the students was attendance. We had kids being late to school, not showing up to school, skipping class. We had to deal with it," said assistant principal Matthew Malowski. "Just giving the students Saturday school wasn't working anymore. We had kids skipping Saturday school to get ISS because they didn't want to give up their Saturdays. Then

we had the kids coming in every Saturday throughout the school year."

"I make an effort to not be late, so it doesn't directly affect me," said senior Ian Tripp. "But I think it could potentially be a major annoyance to people who that's an issue for. Obviously, people shouldn't be late and that's a given. But occasionally there are circumstances beyond a student's control that prevent punctuality, and when students are penalized for those extenuating circumstances, that's when the issue turns cloudy."

Elaine Cawley-Weintraub, history department chair, recognized this controversy of justice versus authoritative structure within her studies. "Any system that isn't applied equally is inherently flawed in its justice," she said. "That being said, if history has shown us anything, it's that one size doesn't fit all. Maybe one kid is late because he overslept, but does that mean he should be punished the same as the kid who was working



PHOTO BY TRUDA SILBERSTEIN

In the morning rush, some students make it to school on time for the second bell, and some don't.

until 3 AM? Knowing history, an extreme system is usually necessary to treat an extreme problem. But that's how revolutions get started."

The long-term implications present a conflict for some students. "Colleges don't look to see why the student received detention. They just add the numbers," said senior Aly Patterson. "I live 15 minutes away from the high school and lateness has been a chronic issue for me since freshman year. The

He truly understands what everyone needs."

"I like to do some extra things for students and teachers. It is important for them to feel they are being respected and that the system is supporting them."

Mr. Johnson believes his desire to create the sort of peaceful atmosphere may have developed during his childhood in Roxbury, Mass. Even early on, after struggling to come to terms with his father's murder, he found solace and support from the family members he lived with in a small apartment including his grandmother, grandfather, aunt, and mother.

During his childhood, Mr. Johnson's tight-knit family taught him how to care for and respect the people around him. He said, "There was always a kettle on the stove and our neighbors were always welcome."

high school is creating a situation where prospective college applicants could be rejected for something that's not entirely their fault."

Jan Wightman, performing arts department chair, pointed out the short-term ramifications of tardiness. "My biggest concern is the impact that tardiness can have on extracurriculars. According to school policy, a student who is tardy can't

participate in after-school activities for that day," she said. "I think the penalty should not be eliminated, but at least lessened. The offense of arriving five minutes late has an impact that's disproportionate to how big of a deal it really is."

Mr. Malowski realized such criticisms. "I know it seems like a strict policy, but it's only because it's such a serious issue. The fact is, we were working so hard last

year with these massive lists of people who weren't where they were supposed to be, weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing. And it's the students' job to show up on time."

Not all students and teachers are opposed to the new tardy policy. With the new state testing requirements, many teachers feel that it is more important that students show up so that teachers can do their jobs. Senior Allison McAndrews, said, "I think that the stricter policies regarding tardiness are necessary. The amount of people coming in late last year was ridiculous and interrupted classes frequently."

Senior Conor Smith agreed. He said, "Everyone has an excuse, but in the end it's your own responsibility to get to school on time. People should accept responsibility for their actions instead of complaining about the harsh punishments."

Students speculate about reasonable alterations to the policy. "I think the five behavior points should only be for a trial period," said Allison. "Once people accept the consequences then the policy can be toned down."

Aly said, "We should adjust the policy. Being over 15 minutes late to school should count toward a detention instead of something as menial as five minutes. We should accommodate for students and their different situations."

"I know people aren't exactly happy about this. Kids aren't happy, and parents aren't happy," said Mr. Malowski. "But in a way, that's kind of the point. That is how we're going to get results."

Where the peaceful things grow

By Lily Bick, Katherine Donegan, Jake Hart, and Paige McLaughlin

Wade Johnson has created an emotional oasis in the high school's copy center. With thousands of copies made daily, the pace in the room can become hectic quickly.

"I noticed the chaos and wanted to do something to change the atmosphere," said Mr. Johnson about the room he began working in three years ago. "I believe complexity, when done well, is simple."

With the help of tea and treats, he has built an environment of tranquility even amidst the demands of the job. Senior Elias Wortmann, said, "The soft music and quirky touches lend such a unique atmosphere to the room.

It's just Wade's warm personality all over the walls.

Senior Celia Mercier agreed. "Wade is such a sweet, generous person," she said. "You can really make an effort to make everyone's day a little better. Most people just don't do that."

Serene music and lollipops or donuts often greet students and teachers who come in. He also has a water cooler and refrigerator where he keeps juice for himself and others who may need a cold drink. He always has something friendly to offer, be it college advice or a friendly chat. Said math teacher Dawn Nelson, "He is such a thoughtful, considerate person.

Rally celebrates fall sports



PHOTO BY TRUDA SILBERSTEIN

Seniors celebrated a tug-of-war victory at last Friday's pep rally. The rally featured all the fall sports teams and a number of inter-class competitions. Guidance counselor John Fiorito emceed.

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