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-As space permits
-Guest columns
-Personal opinions
-Contains libel or obscenities
-Disrupts school environment
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Inconsistent Enforcement of Vague Policies Leads to Confusion Among Staff and Students

-Staff Editorial

The rules and polices in the student handbook of Loy Norrix High School tend to be vague and enforced inconsistently. The vagueness of policies such as the dress code makes it almost impossible for administrators and teachers to enforce the rules, especially because the rules are constantly changing. The rules and regulations are more or less subjective and open to interpretation. Many students break the rules on a daily basis, some intentionally, but some≠ because they do not know what the rules actually are.

The student handbook is supposed to function as a point of reference for students and teachers. However, the vagueness of some of the rules in the handbook such as the hall pass policy, the electronic devices policy, and the I.D. badge policies leave room for different interpretations of the same rule. This creates inconsistencies in the way the rules are enforced and often breeds unfairness and injustice. In being vague the rules can cover larger areas, but vagueness also allows for many loopholes through which students can easily slide.

One of the largest sources of misinterpretation is the dress code. In the handbook under the section about student appearance it states that administrative action will be taken if a student wears "clothing displaying vulgar writing or symbols, or sexual-reference clothing," and also any "clothing that is excessively revealing…" It gives a few examples of clothing that is inappropriate for school, but it also states that the administration has the right to decide if the student's apparel is "unacceptable in light of community standards."

The vagueness of this statement has allowed administrators to interpret the dress code rule according to their perception on what is and is not acceptable. The "fingertip rule" stating that skirts and shorts must be at least as long as your fingertips with your arms at your sides is no longer valid, but nobody knows what the new guidelines for appropriate skirt length are. A skirt that is considered too short on one girl may be considered acceptable on another girl depending on the opinion of the enforcer. By not having a specific and clearly stated dress code the school is promoting injustice and unfairness.

Another example of inconsistency and vagueness is the school rule stating that every student must have a planner for their hall pass. In the Student Handbook it states that; "Hall passes for personal use are permissible after the first one-half hour of the beginning of class and prior to the last 15 minutes of class." This rule is ignored by many students and teachers and seldom enforced by security guards. Countless times a student can be seen strolling through the hallway without a legitimate reason and without a planner, and many times they are not caught, or just allowed to continue on their way. If the administration wants to implement a rule, then they have to be consistent about it and enforce it every day, for every student.

Then there is the electronic devices policy. Last year students were not allowed to have cell phones in school at all. This year students are allowed to have electronic devices in school and they are permitted to use them prior to entering school and after school, but they must stay off and out of sight during class time. Regardless of if we are allowed to have cell phones in school or not, this year many students can be seen blasting their ring tones in the hallway or casually talking to their friends in classrooms as if it were no big deal.

> If the students, teachers, administrators, and security guards were all on the same page, it would be much easier for everyone to follow and enforce the rules.

Teachers and administrators need to be on the same page about what the policies are, and show some consistency in their enforcement of those policies.

A prime example of inconsistency when it comes to school rules is the I.D. policy. According to the student handbook; "The wearing of the I.D. is not an option at Loy Norrix High School. It is a mandatory condition of being on school premises." It also states that if students are unable to secure an I.D. badge that they will be "assigned to the Reclaiming Center for the remainder of the day or until an I.D. badge can be purchased."

However, the enforcement of this policy varies from week to week. Periodically the administration decides to "crack down" on the I.D. policy and enforce it severely, but this usually only happens for a few days and then things are back to normal. Normal conditions concerning the I.D. policy consists of students just slipping past the security guards without I.D.s, borrowing I.D.s from friends, leaving instead of going to the Reclaiming Center, etc.

To confuse matters further, for a few weeks in October and November the administration decided to implement the new temporary I.D. policy. Students were allowed to wear a temporary I.D. in the form of a sticker with their information on it for the day they forgot their I.D. While this was a good idea in theory, in reality it caused chaos and confusion. Teachers didn't know what to make of these new temporary I.D.s and students took advantage of the situation. A policy that had been intended to give students who forgot their I.D. once or twice some leeway, turned into yet another loop hole in the system for many students who never wear their I.D., or who refuse to purchase a new one. Within a few weeks the new temporary I.D. policy was discontinued, resulting in further confusion and frustration.

The primary way Loy Norrix can confront this issue of vagueness and inconsistency in its policies is by making sure that the policies are strongly expressed to the students and teachers, and by ensuring that the policies are consistently enforced throughout the school year. If the students, teachers, administrators, and security guards were all on the same page, it would be much easier for everyone to follow and enforce the rules.

Additionally, the student handbook should be made more specific for each year, so students can reference what is acceptable with less confusion. As a whole Loy Norrix needs some consistency in its policies, both in enforcing them, and in following them.

By Andrew Chapman

Computers Diminish Books' Importance

Cristina Flocea
Staff Writer

A decade ago, books were the main source of information students used to do their assignments. Now everything has changed. It is not a surprising fact that seven out of ten students from Loy Norrix think that the internet is a better source of information than books. Because more people prefer using the internet to reading, books may soon disappear.

With all its variety, diversity and multitude of information, the internet has the ability to take students into the virtual world where the things are more interesting and attractive. It can make students forget about books and their value. Often students prefer to surf the internet and have fun, rather than get bored reading a book.

" I love the internet. It is so easy and fast. I don't like to read books. Books are not fun," sophomore Max Klepper said.

But is this enough to permit us to forget about the importance of books? Just because the internet is fast, easy and fun, is this enough to cause addiction? It doesn't even take much brain-power to search for on-line assignments that are already done for you.

Many of you can say that the information on the internet is already grouped, so you don't have to spend time reading a book because you can simply print it from the computer. You may be right, but reading and understanding what you've read helps you remember that information for a long time. You are not just reading a book for your assignment, you are also reading for your own intelligence and for your improvement.

Reading books rather than printing all kind of different pieces of information from the internet makes you sure about what you've done because you know everything you have written in your paper is gathered by your efforts and knowledge. Reading and underlining everything you found that is new and interesting is more helpful than just copying and stealing something that doesn't belong to you.

What about the way information is arranged on the websites? Spread out, chaotic and hard to find?

" It is hard to find reliable sources on the internet when you have a lot of spread files everywhere and you don't know what to choose, " junior Samantha Russ said.

It is hard and confusing to get what you want, you may even get the wrong information that doesn't match with the things you are trying to get.

" Internet doesn't always provide the information you need," senior Sarah Bradshaw added.

And it's true because besides all the commercials and advertisements that distract you from your tasks, you can stumble across a lot of inappropriate information that doesn't coincide with what you need.

> Books are the only things that give us real education by studying and reading them. Is not enough to click "search" on a web-page.

It seems that everyone has forgotten about the simple pleasure of sitting in an armchair, reading a good book and being excited about what will happen in the next chapter. You can't get the real satisfaction of reading from a laptop or a website. A book doesn't make your eyes as tired as a computer's screen does.

Books existed before the internet was introduced. They are are older and that's why they have more value because without them there would be no internet, but we keep forgetting about the real importance of the books.

The internet is something well-known. There is nothing special about the internet besides entertainment and fast speed. Even small kids know how to navigate it. You can't say the same thing about a precious, valuable, old book, that gives you unusual feelings when you hold it in your hands, and you can't resist reading it.

Books are different and they deserve our attention because they are the only things that make us understand the truth about life.

Books are the only things that give us real education by studying and reading them. Is not enough to click "search" on a web-page.

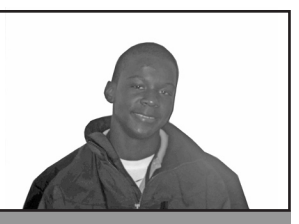
Read, understand and make your opinion. This will help you be the person you want to be.

Choose to be yourself, not a virtual copy printed somewhere from the internet.

KNIGHTS SPEAK OUT

How does the IGNITE program affect you and Loy Norrix High School?

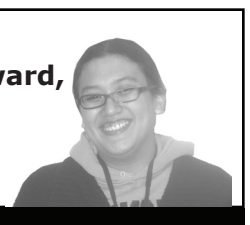
Trey Swift, mentee



Trey Swift, freshman

"It develops the communication between students and teachers."

Michelle Howard, mentor



Michelle Howard, senior

"It helps us have fewer fights, less cursing down the hallways, and more respect for the teachers."

Jane Ryan, IGNITE coordinator

Jane Ryan

"It's going to do a lot for spirit and to build on a sense of community."

Jazmin Demink, mentee

Jazmin Demink, freshman

"IGNITE can help kids understand their classes and they would get more social with other high classes."