

This article examines the pro and cons of the zero police in schools.

### Zero Tolerance May be Hazards to Your Child's Education

My Cub Scout kindergarten kid was kicked out of school because he had a Cub Scout instrument. It contained eating implements – fork, spoon a tiny knife. While it wasn't my kid, it could have been. Today we see too many stupid actions like these in public schools.

School officials have adopted a Zero Tolerance Policy. They apparently think that such a policy saves them from making any common sense decision. There is no doubt that a policy is needed to prevent violence at a school, but that doesn't mean that a little common sense can't be used.

I was the head of the education administration education program at a good university for over twenty years and if any of our graduates pursue such a policy we did or poor job or they are in a system that is doing a lousy job. One of the main functions of any administrator is to make decisions. There is no way that a rule or policy can be made to cover every situation. If it could be then there would not be a need for an administrator. All the person would have to do is follow the policy.

Before working at the university I had been a teacher, principal, and superintendent. So how would my staff and I handle the Cub Scout issue? The teacher would say to the boy “Johnny what have you got there?” “That is nice for Cub Scout work, but it has a small knife in it and someone here at school might not know how to use it and could get hurt. That is why that we don’t allow any knives, big or small, here at school. So let me have it so I can keep it for you till after school.” If the child was in the primary grades the teacher would most likely call the parents and explain the situation. As a principal I would probably never be involved as the teacher used common sense which enabled her to follow the policy and use it as a learning experience.

Parent, does your school have a zero tolerance policy? Do they follow rigidly or do they use it along with some common sense? Policies are designed to insure consistency of action in an organization. Policies are not designed to dictate decisions as that is the role of the professional personnel. In schools it is the role of the teacher or administrator to interpret the problem in terms of the situation, general policy and desired out come. A little common sense will prevent many problems and insure better operations. After all isn’t that why professional are employed.

I would strongly encourage you to see what your school's policy is and how it operates. Insist on them making changes if necessary. If you would like more information about how schools operate then look at Strong's Website.

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