Should students be able to wear hats and hoods inside?

By: Kimberly B.
With help from Rachel W.

Students wake up every day, get ready for school, go to school, do work, come home from school, do up to hours of homework, and then go to bed only to repeat the cycle the next day. It seems like a lot, but somehow we manage. Since most of us spend at least 13 years of our lives in school, doesn’t it seem reasonable for us to be comfortable and look the way we want when we’re there? I personally don’t think it’s too much to ask.

Recently CHOICE Academy has been strictly enforcing the “No Hat” policy. When I say strictly, I mean that some students will get detention if they are seen with a hat on. So it really gets you thinking: Why aren’t we allowed to wear hats in school? When I asked students that question, no one seemed to have the same, consistent answer. Since our vice-principal feels so strongly about hats, shouldn’t he be telling us why we can’t wear them? Every single time I have heard someone say “No hats in school” or “hats off” there’s never been an explanation. At our school if someone tells you to take your hat off, you do it and don’t ask why. It’s just the rule and your job as a student is to follow it and no one asks questions. Well I decided that we need to ask questions because in order to follow a rule, you have to know why it exists and how it contributes to your society. With this in mind I listened to Mr. Cantwell’s input to see why we officially cannot wear hats at school.

After listening to Mr. Cantwell talk I figured out that he is only enforcing the hat policy because it against our districts rules. He said that he could care less about whether kids wear hats or not, he just wants to do his job.

Although it is against the rules, most of our student body disagrees. I took a poll to prove it. I asked 54 students if they were for or against hats. One student out of those 54 said that they were against hats. One student. That means that about 98% of the students at our school think that we should be able to wear hats. Isn’t that saying something right there? I wanted to get the students opinions so Rachel and I interviewed a couple of them that felt strongly about the situation. First we interviewed Dago, a seventh grader here at CHOICE, because he got detention for wearing a hat.

Question: Why do you want to wear hats?

Dago’s Answer: “I want to wear hats because they personalize what I’m wearing. It completes the outfit.”

Q: Do you understand why we can’t wear hats?

A: “It’s for respect, and they say it’s a distraction. But during
lunch, in the halls, and during break time, we’re not learning, so it shouldn’t be a distraction.”

Q: Do you think this rule is important enough to change it?

A: “When we get detention for wearing a hat during lunch, it’s kind of a big deal, so yes.”

Q: If the rule were to change, should there be limits?

A: “If you were in class and the teacher asked you to take it off, then yes, you should take it off, but not when it’s not causing a distraction from learning.”

Have you heard of or seen someone at our school refuse to take their hat off? I have, and I’m sure that a lot of other students can say that if anything, asking a student to take a hat off is more of a distraction than wearing one. Usually there’s a small debate between the teacher and the pupil. From my spectating point of view I can see that the student can do this all day, but some teachers seem uncomfortable and they just want the conversation to be over. Mrs. Powers, our 7th and 8th grade History teacher, says “Don’t make me the hat police.” She expects her students to know the rules and listen to them. But how can students follow something that is unnecessary and unbefitting to them? That question is just added to the list of questions that regard the “No Hat” policy.

I believe that the policy at our school is a ridiculous rule that needs to be changed because most of our school is against it, and frankly, we should have the choice to wear what we want. Prohibiting us from wearing hats is like restricting teachers from drinking coffee: everyone would be mad that they had a basic right taken away from them.