



A few examples... students have been harshly punished for bringing butter knives to school (a violation of "weapons" rules), for sharing cough drops with fellow students (a violation of "drug" laws), and for simply forgetting to wear a belt to school (violation of dress code). Although "Zero Tolerance" policies have not proven to reduce violent crime in schools, they have been shown to unfairly target poor people of color.

Schools are meant to be places for learning. Education refers to the practice and process of acquiring knowledge, and developing powers of reasoning and judgement. "Zero Tolerance" policies, by definition, require an automatic punishment for the breaking of a rule. Young people, however, deserve a learning environment in which figures of authority are able to see the complexity of behaviors and actions.



When a school rule is broken, it is not usually necessary to involve police. Often, both students and teachers can grow while attempting to understand and resolve conflicts. A culture of safety and peace within a school cannot be built upon the foundations of unfair punishment and fear.

Safety and peace take root when they grow from a culture of respect, understanding, and tolerance.

