



Ban This!

They've banned hugging in New Jersey, thoughts?

by Suelain Moy

At a middle school in New Jersey, [the principal has banned hugging](#) (punishable by a visit to the dean's office and a day of suspension.) In Philadelphia, public schools are considering whether or not [they should ban hoodies](#). At an orthodox Jewish school in Brooklyn, administrators [cracked down on Facebook usage](#), after [the popular social](#)



[ing site](#) failed to get stop. As a result of their infractions, 22 students were fined \$100 each. t Britain, some schools have adopted [a policy of banning "best friends."](#) Instead, children are aged to play in large groups. Apparently, doing so cuts down on all the discord and fights g from one-on-one peer bonding and the fallout that can happen when they stop being BFFs. seems bothered about the fact that children need to learn how to socialize and negotiate the rous terrain of social relationships, along with reading, writing, and arithmetic. ingly, parents and educators find themselves like the king and queen in Sleeping Beauty who d spinning, so their beloved daughter would not prick her finger. (She did anyway, and the castle fell asleep at their posts for 100 years.) The world stopped until that handsome prince on his white horse to awaken her.

In real life, if you don't wake up to your own life, guess what? The world doesn't stop. Nope, instead the good stuff, the stuff you really want, doesn't happen. It can't. If you don't wake up to study and take the test, you don't pass. If you don't go to school, you don't graduate. At any moment of any day, there are a million reasons why you could perish or fail for trying.

Whether it's finding fault with hugs, best friends, [hoodies](#), or Facebook, more and more parents and educators are finding themselves challenged to regulate, or outright banish, such real life experiences and lessons as disappointment, hurt, jealousy, and envy. I would like to argue that even with such carefully considered edicts, life in the kingdom may not actually going to improve.

Regulating early experiences and seeing the world in such stark black-and-white terms—Facebook bad! Group games good!—are actually depriving our kids of the very real need to learn how to cope. Life is full of frustration, conflict, strife, and difficulty. These are the times that try parents' and kids' souls. Children are going to need their hugs, their hoodies, their best friends. Honestly, after the hurt of losing your best friend in 3rd grade, comes the very real threat and pain of losing your best friend in the 6th grade or the 8th. One thing is inevitable: after middle school comes high school, and with it, a whole other series of crushes, delays, and devastations. You don't get to make that goal that kicks the team to victory, you don't get into your first-choice of college, or somebody else gets your

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we face every day—and often we must. **Even** we are going to learn how to deal with the bigger, more random and serious stuff that g way later. Look, I'm not telling parents and educators to stop looking out for kids, but it's critical to know what a real emergency or tragedy is—a kid driven to depression and suicide from bullying, a daunting intersection that's too dangerous to cross unless you're in a tank. These are the real perils. Then shore up your kids as best as you can.

Guide them in the way they should go. Teach them how to fall, and not to avoid falling in the first place. We all know you land (and hurt) much harder if you resist. Sometimes not getting what you want can lead to something really wonderful. You'll never discover it if you don't get up to try, or fumble, or fly, another day.



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17 Responses to *Ban This!*

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kaunet says:

April 11, 2012 at 3:16 pm

I totally agree!! We are trying to cushion our children too much. Bad things happen no matter how you try to prevent them. Teaching our kids how to cope with the bad things that happen is MORE important than trying to prevent them, because no matter how hard you try, you just can't. If they learn to cope with the smaller frustrations and disappointments, the hope is that this will prepare them for some of the bigger trials and tragedies that come their way. We can't protect them for ever, but we can prepare them for battle.

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Amy says:

April 11, 2012 at 3:42 pm

Wow... Banning best friends? Uggs, hoodies, Facebook is one life. But you can't say who to have or not have a relationship with. That's crossing a line, and is truly ridiculous. Whoever thought banning best friends is a good idea ought to be fired. I just don't understand how that would be enforced, let alone how that will help. I agree, this banning nonsense has got to stop, and the adults need to grow up. Banning something in a school won't stop it from happening, and banning something from happening outside of school is uncalled for. Utterly ridiculous. Thank you to the author of this article.

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Josie says:

April 12, 2012 at 12:53 am

I agree. Banning best friends? That is so sad.

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Jessie says:

April 18, 2012 at 9:56 pm

Exactly. I don't know how I would have survive school without my best friend, as I was quite "socially awkward". Children trully need to learn how to socialize and solve relationship problems on their own, since there will not be someone there to solve all their problems for them when they are older. Thanks to the author of this great article!

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Debra says:

April 11, 2012 at 5:15 pm

We cyberschool our children at home. So, they can be BFF's without worrying about getti

ng fined. They use Facebook (within reason). They get hugs whenever they want them or need them. Things have gone too far.

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adama123 says:

April 11, 2012 at 7:11 pm

I do not think that is fair at all and I think that charging them is unnessisary.

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John says:

April 12, 2012 at 12:58 am

Great article! Thank you! I enjoyed reading it. I have an issue, though (are you surprised - lol).

You said, "I'm not referring to cases of real injustice here..." But you are. Very much so. Injustice can come from well-intentioned source...s. Parents want to protect their children. There's nothing wrong with that. It's instinctive! But where does the motivation for these reactionary policies lie? I believe it belongs squarely in the realm of fear; No parent wants to be called to the Principal's office because their child was accused of sexually harrasing another student simply because they hugged them; No parent wants their child shot in the chest by a security guard because they were wearing a hoodie and looked suspicious; No parent wants their child molested by a sexual predator they met on facebook.

Rational fears? Absolutely not! Fears that are a product of our media-infested times? Yes! Media is not what it used to be. Journalism is no longer the genre of free-thinkers and do-gooders. It's a business. What do they gain from sensationalism? More sponsors! Better ratings! More money.

But to the point of your article: Yes. We do a huge disservice to our children by enforcing rules based on societal and media-driven fears. Reactionary policies do not work. History has proven repeatedly that measures imposed to enforce control are fundamentally flawed. What's the flaw? Free expression is a completely human characteristic that cannot be controlled! Children are our best example of that.

We're adults. We forget the freedom of childhood. Force any doctrine on someone (especially children) and they will rebel. They will do the opposite. Telling a child not to do something is tantamount to saying, "I dare you to defy me!" And they will defy you.

So, the injustice is real. Kids are human beings with independent thoughts and ideas. I know anecdotal evidence is pretty much tertiary but... my parents were anti-disciplinarians. We could do whatever we wanted and we were punished for nothing. I have 7 siblings! We were told from an early age that we would reap the consequences of our own actions. They were NOT there to support us if something went wrong. The result? I knew at a very early age that I was responsible. If I messed up I had to answer for it. Out of that came 8 very astute and clever children who knew boundaries. We knew consequences. We were responsible for our own destinies. We were adults with the ability to judge before we were adults.

I have no agenda. Everyone is free to raise their children as they see fit. In my heart, though, I believe excessive rules and conditions serve the opposite purpose. As I said, we're humans with free-thought from birth. I believe that freedom should be cherished and rewarded from day one.

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powerpokmon says:

April 12, 2012 at 11:08 am

Finally someone has stoned up to schools! Why should schools be in charge of what stude

nts do outside of school. Banning best friends is so so so low. So low in fact i would switc h schools. I say we prtoest people because they are voilating (sorry i can't spell very great) our continitional rights. Those schools should be put on trial!! Its all about they want a nd not waht the students want. Exactly like a dictorship! Thank you Suelain Moy for bring ing awareness to this situation.

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oscrgrchy says:

April 12, 2012 at 11:17 am

The challenge is we are so wrapped up in our fears driven by real bullying and things tha t have happened to some children but at the same time very nostalgic (sorry if spelling is wrong) about the freedom we had as a child. When my son was in primary school there w as a shooting at a school in Scotland, so not even on the same continent, so a parent trie d to ban all adults from the school including parents. Wanting all door locked at all times but have a child size doggie door so the kids wouldn't be locked out. Her proposal was so extreme it was ridiculous and didn't pass but had she been a little less extreme who kno ws. Our playground has pulled swings and teeter totters and some are talking about takin g away all playground equipment so kids will just play in a natural setting. We really nee d to stand up to the fear mongers or we will all be held in our little safe, sterile box and s afely communicate only through computers (yes that is extreme and I really don't believe we will ever come to that but we do need to wake up and let kids play, explore and unfor tunately get hurt at times as it is part of growing up healthy, learning to deal with the bu mps and hurts in life.) It is time to start giving kids tools to effectively deal with bullies a nd hurts because the bullies don't all out grow it, how many adults are helpless with deal ing with bullies at work or in their neighbourhood. How many people are turning to medi cation, alcohol or other stuff so they don't have to deal with hurting.

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powerpokmon says:

April 12, 2012 at 11:20 am

This should be a crime! The US government should have a law saying schools are not allo wed to be a dictatorship and are not allowing to make rules voilating our continusional ri ghts. These schools really need to grow up and wake up!! Come on parents, lets stand up for our childern

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Parent Volunteer says:

April 12, 2012 at 6:48 pm

Not saying this is right or wrong, but the next time you want to point fingers and/or be q uick to judge how schools and/or principals/administrators/teachers are doing their jobs, I invite you to spend some time at a local middle school (or any school for that matter). V olunteer in some way at the school so that you can see for yourself what schools have to deal with/handle on a daily basis. Believe me it is a real eye-opener and it will give you p ause to think. Thanks for reading.

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horselover90 says:

June 17, 2013 at 8:51 pm

There is no reason to ban best friends and hoodies. How does it help with the d ay to day operations of a school?

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ThatOneChick says:

April 12, 2012 at 8:06 pm

Wow. Just . . . Wow. What right do they have to go banning everything? Banning best friends? That's completely ridiculous. I can understand banning Facebook while the kids are at school. My high school does it. The other stuff? I say again: Wow.

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