

# time for a change?

## A LOOK INSIDE THE RULE BOOK

By Zach Backus

**R**ules, they're made to protect and keep the order between people, or as some clique would say, "they are made to be broken." But there inevitably comes a point when some rules just become outdated and need to be changed. At Baxter High School, the majority of students believe that there are some rules in the handbook that need to be looked at and revised. These rules include the dress code and the no eating in classrooms policy.

In recent years, the dress code at Baxter has started to become more of a popular topic, raising the question whether or not it is just and fair. In the 2019-2020 Baxter Student Handbook, pages 10-11 state the dress code as the following, "(4) No strapless tops or sleeveless tops. No tops that show midriff. Sleeveless tops must reach the end of one's shoulder" (The other three rules being no hats, no obscene material on clothing, and no clothing that puts the safety of the building at question). The dress code, which is written by the school board, is not fair to women and only makes sure that guys are not distracted in class. The code says nothing about guys wearing inappropriate clothing other than shirts that have obscene material printed on them. Bekka Watt, 12 gives her thoughts on the dress code, "All dress codes do are limit what women can wear and the reason for this is only so that boys can focus in school." As times change so does fashion, as well as what is acceptable to wear. Watt believes women should have more freedoms, she says, "Women should be able to wear whatever they are confident in without being judged." The dress code at Baxter prohibits this by limiting their expressive freedoms which creates an environment where women are objectified. When women's bodies are being sexualized by men it instills a sense of insecurity. This makes it harder for them to wear what makes them feel good without feeling judged by their classmates and, worst of all, it is being condoned by the entity that supposed to protect them, their school. "No I've never actually been dress coded but I've definitely gotten glares and looks from administrators that make me feel self conscious about my outfit even though I know it's not revealing. I've watched multiple of my friends be dress coded when they should not have been," Watt says when asked if she's ever been dress coded. It is clear that something should be changed about the dress code and that it should be updated to follow the modernization of 2020. Other people think the dress code does not need to be changed, "I feel like the dress code is perfectly fine but we just need to enforce the rules better about people not wearing the right stuff," said Maddie Pierce, 11. When Mr. Luther, the principal at Baxter, was asked about the dress code he said, "It is a policy that is set forth by the school board. Most people think it is a Mr. Luther policy, but it is not. On a personal level, dress code is something I don't draw a hard line on. I think fashion is changing and if everyone can dress respectfully I don't have to be the dress code monster." Although people have their own opinions on the dress code, it is clear some people are not happy with it and it should be changed to allow women to feel confident and happy in their own body.

Another rule out of the handbook that causes some controversy is the no food or drink in classrooms. Mr. Luther has made it very clear that there should be no food in the classrooms, and the handbook states it as the following on page 14, "No food or beverage other than water is allowed in any classroom. Any exception must be approved by school administration." Mr. Luther, and the handbook, are very straight forward about this rule and when asked about it Luther said, "I think that it is really important that students aren't eating in classrooms because it puts a lot of work on the custodial staff. Kids aren't good at picking up after themselves and it creates the image of a relaxed learning environment, it's not a time to eat breakfast. With the new building we aren't going to be taking things into the classrooms especially because of the carpet." Mr. Luther hopes that by enforcing this rule sooner than later it will make it easier for students not to bring food into the new building in the upcoming school year, also reducing the load of the custodial staff. Despite this courtesy, many people believe that students should be allowed to eat in the classroom, "Mostly because I don't eat breakfast and I can't stay focused so its like instinct and I just start eating. It could be chips, or a whole sandwich. It's just something I do because I have weight and speed first period and I lift at six in the morning," said Braeden Kelly, 10, when asked if he eats in class. Students not eating breakfast is a common theme around Baxter and many other schools. Maybe because they don't have time, or there may not be food at home for breakfast. Nick Nelson, 10, talks about not eating breakfast, "I don't eat breakfast because I usually don't have time or am not feeling good in the morning, so it is just more convenient to eat at school. Also it makes me happy," he continues to talk about his deep passion and love for food, "If I'm hungry I can't concentrate as well, especially in a class right before lunch because all I can think about is food. It doesn't help that food is literally my life and my number one love in the world." Being hungry in class can really take a toll on students, taking away from their focus and concentration. Some students have even offered alternatives such as handing out protein bars or designated snack times during the day. Though this is something that many people would like to see happen, they can only hope that the school will listen and hear what they are saying.

With times changing, and the start of a new decade, it was time to look at a couple controversial rules in the Baxter High School Handbook such as no eating in classrooms, and the student dress code. These are rules that many students at Baxter hope to see changed in the future as they are outdated.

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