12-Year-Old Finds Knife at School, Turns it in, Gets Suspended For a Year

Via Newschannel 3 out of Michigan:

> *A Branch County mother says her son was suspended from school for doing the right thing.*
>
> *Kyler Davies, a 7th grade student, found a pocket knife in his backpack. His mom tells us she bought the bag at Goodwill and never checked it. When her son found it, he told a counselor, and was suspended.*
>
> *"He was turning it over like he was supposed to, and you are punishing him for doing what's right. So what is that teaching these kids?" his mother Denise Davies asked.*

The story sounds almost too crazy to believe. But when the television station reached out to the Coldwater, Mich., superintendent, there was no denial. The only comment was this:

> *Coldwater Community Schools does not disclose information regarding the discipline of individual students under any circumstance. However, discipline procedures are in our student handbook and are consistent with Coldwater Community Schools Board of Education policies which comply with the current laws of the State of Michigan regarding student discipline.*

This sounds like another example of schools taking zero tolerance policies to a degree that is absurd. Intellectual Takeout has reported on some of the problems with these policies—examples can be found here and here—that seem to

create systems without prudence.

In Kyle's case, the suspension reportedly was reduced to 30 days; but that penalty still seems beyond the pale for a student who was trying to do the right thing. And there is no reason to doubt Kyle's story.

The Goodwill store issued a statement saying "it is possible something was missed" in the backpack that his mother purchased. The store implies that it does have a rigid inspection policy in place, saying that staff simply "do their best" to inspect donated items.

If Kyle's story is true, as it appears to be, the punishment is a travesty. To suspend a student for turning in a knife is not just dumb, it is lousy policy. As Robby Soave at Reason notes:

> *The school is teaching children that if they find a knife in school, they should keep it to themselves or pass it off to someone else. Nobody wants to be suspended for weeks for something that wasn't their fault.*

Is this another example of schools administrators acting as mindless bureaucrats instead of educational leaders serving the interests of their students?

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Jon Miltimore is senior editor of Intellectual Takeout. Follow him on Facebook.

[Image Credit: Screenshot via WWMT.com]