

# Bubble-Wrapping Children: School Bans Students from Touching Snow

Several years ago, the now world-famous clinical psychologist Jordan Peterson made a [list of 32 rules](#) for living and posted them on Quora. Those rules became so popular that Peterson fleshed out a handful of them in the book [12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos](#).

Peterson's original list was headed by a simple maxim: "Encourage children through play."

Unfortunately, that bit of advice is increasingly ignored. The latest example of this occurred at a school in London. According to news reports, recent snowfalls led Ges Smith, the head of the Jo Richardson Community School, to decree that pupils were not allowed to have snowball fights, nor were they even allowed to touch the snow lest they fall into temptation to lob some of the fluffy stuff at another student.

Not surprisingly, the backlash was overwhelming, earning Mr. Smith [an interview](#) with Piers Morgan. As Smith explains in the interview, he prevents students from touching the snow for two reasons: 1) To prevent injury, and 2) To ensure children are equipped and ready for school.

Mr. Smith's reasoning on the last point is particularly interesting:

*"There's a thing about being fit for work, you know, not being ready for school. If you're soaking wet, your hands are cold, you've been involved in a fight, you've had something thrown at you, the last thing you do before you go to school into the classroom is have a snowball in your face, you're not ready to learn."*

What Smith says is true in the sense that wet, cold, and dirty children are not ready to learn in the structured format that we've come to refer to as learning. But does the emphasis we place on structured, sheltered learning prevent children from learning in other senses, particularly endurance in the challenges of life? And if so, do we need to draw back from our tendency to coddle children?

Philosopher John Locke addressed this issue when he wrote [Some Thoughts on Education](#). Locke advised parents to allow their children to get wet and cold, cautioning objecting mothers "that most children's constitutions are either spoiled, or at least harmed, by cockering and tenderness." To combat this, Locke advised the following:

*"Another thing, that is of great advantage to every one's health, but especially children's, is, to be much in the open air, and very little, as may be, by the fire, even in winter. By this he will accustom himself also to heat and cold, shine and rain; all which if a man's body will not endure, it will serve him to very little purpose in this world: and when he is grown up, it is too late to begin to use him to it: it must be got early and by degrees. Thus the body may be brought to bear almost any thing."*

Many parents might nod and agree with Locke, scorning teachers like Ges Smith who deny children this opportunity. The trouble is, as Smith suggests to Piers Morgan, some parents are not always consistent in their reasoning, and when their child gets hurt, or wet, or cold during play, they are quick to turn on school authorities:

*"What you didn't operate in is a society whereby the first thing that happens, a parent is on the phone to that company to make that claim, and I'm responsible."*

His concern makes sense. The question then becomes, are we as

adults prepared to be less reactive to every scenario in which our children get hurt or uncomfortable? If we're not, then we might as well get used to a society that bubble-wraps our children and prevents them from growing into happy, capable, and well-adjusted children.

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