



OPINION

Photo Illustration by Sheldon Petersen

Discipline Shouldn't Discriminate

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When someone does something wrong, there are consequences. When someone breaks the law, they are charged or ticketed accordingly. It's simple. Or at least this concept should be.

Based on recent events, some students feel GJHS is contributing to social injustice and displaying blatant favoritism among the student body.

In the last few weeks, I have talked to many students who believe that clubs and sports programs are favoring students and allowing students to walk away from bad decisions with a slap on the wrist. These programs publicly display their standards for students which include integrity, accountability, and trust. However, some students feel their actions prove otherwise.

"It depends on who they are as a student and if administration likes them or not," Jake Griffin, junior, said about his perception that not all students are treated equally.

Students who spoke to the Orange and Black wonder whether a student's punishment is based off of their relationship to the school, involvement in sports, or whether they are in leadership positions or not.

According to the psychologytoday.com, the 'good ole boy system' can be defined as "an informal system of friendships and connections through which men use their positions of influence in providing favors and information to help other men."

Some students feel this network is in play at GJHS in order to provide certain students with lesser punishments.

According to Principal Meghan Roenicke, each student is treated equally and no student is favored over the other.

"I think that when you are a public figure, you are held to the same standard as everyone else," Roenicke said.

After talking to many students who said they observed unequal treatment, it was obviously the right thing to do to talk

to administration as well. When I asked about certain events that suggested inequality, they were unable to confirm specific incidences. In order to protect students' privacy, they could not confirm any form of punishment or consequence. So how can we be sure justice is being served?

The role of the principal, vice principal, dean of students, or even the superintendent is to ensure safety of students, provide adequate education, and uphold fair treatment. School is a place for learning, growth, and molding your future. No student should have to worry about unequal treatment.

According to Tom LeFebre, Dean of Students, two students, one who is a leader and one who isn't, would be offered the same exact punishment for the same offense. Each student would be given the choice of Pathways or suspension. Pathways is a program meant to help educate students about decision making, coping skills, maturity, and substance abuse.

After administration determines a punishment for students, it is then the responsibility of the club's sponsor, bylaws, or organization's coach to give further consequences or not. In my opinion, clubs and extracurriculars need to have a higher standard for those in leadership positions and dismiss students who engage in illegal activity.

"It's really tricky to say that if you're in a leadership role, you should have a more significant consequence," said Roenicke. "It's a really slippery slope."

One thing to remember is that students are still learning and growing. Everyone makes mistakes and deserves the opportunity to change. If we don't have the right punishments for each student, will they ever learn from their mistakes? As a school, what can we do better to make sure the right consequences are in place?

We should not allow our leaders, athletes, and other student role models to maintain their positions, after a drug or alcohol offense. It destroys the organization's reputation, destroys trust within our school, and destroys any standard we claimed to have for our role models.