



Oak Park School Bans Hugging

Principal Says “Hug Lines” In Hallways Create Bottlenecks, Make Students Late For Class

By Mike Puccinelli, 28 September 2007

(CBS) OAK PARK, Ill. Schools just say no to bullying and fighting, but hugging? CBS 2 West Suburban Bureau Chief Mike Puccinelli reports that a local middle school wants the embracing to stop.

“Last year we would see maybe as many as 10 students on one side (of the hallway), 10 on the other and then, going in opposite directions, would sort of have a hug line going on and you could see where that would be a problem,” said Victoria Sharts, principal of Oak Park’s Percy Julian Middle School.

So this year Sharts decided to draw the line on hug lines by banning all hugging among students within the building.

Sharts said, “Hugging is really more appropriate for airports or for family reunions than passing and seeing each other every few minutes in the halls.”

When teachers started enforcing the new policy last month all hallways and classrooms in the 860-student school became hug-free zones.

When our cameras rolling during passing period today there was no hugging to be seen.

Sixth grader Isabella Miller disagrees with the crackdown. “I don’t think that that’s right.”

Her father agrees with her.

“It seems like a crazy idea to me,” Mark Miller said.

The principal says the rampant hugging is creating bottle necks in the hallway and making kids late for class. Furthermore she says although hugs are supposed to be handshakes from the heart some times they don’t seem so innocent.

“Too long, too close, and usually between boys and girls,” Sharts said.

After school, while safely outside the building, the students seemed determined to show what they think of the policy, one hug at a time.

Sharts said the hug ban is just one element of a comprehensive discipline and anti-bullying plan. High-fiving in the hallways is also frowned upon.

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