

534 School detentions in three days!

School detentions recently hit the news headlines in Britain when one headmistress handed out an amazing 534 detentions in three days! Following complaints by some parents of the *City of Ely Community College* in Cambridgeshire the story made the news in Britain. The detentions follow the headmistress's introduction of a 'zero tolerance policy' to improve the standards in her school. Catherine Jenkinson-Dix won the support of many parents after deciding to punish the misdemeanours including chewing gum, eating between lessons, smoking, carrying mobile phones, applying excessive make-up and insubordination. A strict uniform policy was also announced under which individualistic touches such as odd socks or wearing hoodies in class would be banned. Anyone breaking the rules would be sent immediately to the school hall for five hours where they would have to read a booklet about good behaviour.

On Monday, the first day of the policy 236 children – a fifth of pupils were punished. On the second day the figure was 183, and on the third day it was 115. By the fourth day at lunchtime the figure was just 30. Supporters of the idea said the diminishing figures proved it was working. But the crackdown divided parents, with some calling it draconian. Others said old-fashioned discipline will be reflected in academic achievement. One mother said: "My son Jack was given a detention on Monday for talking when he was meant to be reading a book. He learned not to do it again and he hasn't been back since." The mother added, "Teenagers need guidelines and they always push boundaries. If they know what the guidelines are they behave themselves. Another parent said, "There are plenty who agree what the school is doing. Yes, the children that get detentions miss classes. But my son said that after several hours with nothing to do most of them actually want to be back in class. I think it's a stroke of genius."

Some parents however strongly disagree with the idea. A few have removed their children from the school in protest. A letter to the 1,295 pupil's parents explained the 14-point zero tolerance policy and the punishment of sitting in the school hall and reading the booklet *Right To Teach, Right To Learn*, which lists the rules. Those still not getting the idea are sent to an

Category: Education / Students / Detention

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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'isolation unit', a room away from other children. The rules were drafted after a 'minority' of pupils failed to meet 'basic expectations'.

Headmistress Mrs Jenkinson-Dix: 'Low level issues, such as using mobile phones, affect staff's ability to teach pupils and also affect those pupils who are trying to learn. If we can eradicate these, all students will be able to receive the best possible education. I am pleased to say I have the support of the majority of parents.' Governor Ben Gibbs: "Teachers are saying they are getting through their lesson plans quicker and we have feedback from students effectively saying how much better the lessons are."

What pupils are punished for: 1) *Incorrect school uniform – Excessive make up, jewellery, shoes, trousers, skirts, hair etc;* 2) *Outdoor clothing worn indoors;* 3) *Smoking;* 4) *Eating in class/chewing gum;* 5) *Eating in undesignated areas;* 6) *Dropping litter;* 7) *Visible mobile phone, in corridors as well as in lesson time;* 8) *Visible iPod/MP3 players/any electronic equipment that is not part of the lesson; also banned in the corridor;* 9) *Visible earphones, including in the corridor as well as in lesson time;* 10) *Lateness to registration class;* 11) *Refusal to follow a member of staff's instruction;* 12) *Rudeness towards a member of the school (pupils or staff);* 13) *Running in the corridors;* 14) *Misbehaving to or from school (including on the buses).*

Note: Nearly forty years ago in Britain when I was at school a detention was taken *after* school. Detention duties included cleaning the classrooms, school corridors and toilets. Pupils who overstepped the mark beyond a certain point were 'sent to the headmaster' where they were given the cane. At the worst they were expelled.

In 1973, Britain then joined the EEC and a couple of years later 'human rights' came into focus. The cane was banned. 'Trendy teaching' was introduced by the Labour party. Grammar schools were mostly abolished! So old teaching methods disappeared. With the removal of the cane teachers lost their power and more importantly 'respect'. Teaching standards went downhill, as classes became disruptive, with many teachers unable to control classes. Many quit the profession.

The result of all this today in Britain is a generation of 16-24 year olds (1 in 4 = 25%) unable to get a job, who live off benefits, and who don't want to work. They are also too lazy to get out of bed and look for a job. Ultimately, they are unemployable. So getting back to basics and giving detentions is a good way of learning to respect the rules of life and others. It also allows education to be taught without unnecessary disruptions. Ultimately, this allows students to get a better education and hopefully a (better) job.

EXERCISES

1. Detention: What does the word mean? Think of three things you know about detentions. Go round the room swapping details with others.

2. Dictation: The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

3. Reading: The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. Vocabulary: Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. The article: Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) How does the article compare to what is practised in your country?

6. School punishments! Think of five school punishments. Then add five reasons why pupils might be punished at school. Write them below. Discuss together with your partner?

School punishments	Reasons pupils are punished at school
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

7. Let's think! Think of three reasons what a detention might teach you about life. Then think of three reasons why one should study hard at school. Write them below. Discuss them together with your partner. What are your conclusions?

What a detention might teach you about life	Reasons why one should study hard at school
1	1
2	2
3	3

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

534 School detentions in three days! – 10th May 2011

8. Detention! In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with the '**Detention**'. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

9. Let's roleplay: School FM: In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *School FM* radio studio in London. Today's interview is about: *534 school detentions at the City of Ely community College in Cambridgeshire, England*.

1	The headmistress	3	A naughty pupil
2	A teacher	4	A parent (either be <i>for</i> or <i>against</i>)

The teacher will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class

10. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Name the school.
- 2) Name the headmistress.
- 3) What country is the school in?
- 4) What happened on the first day of the policy?
- 5) How many pupils are at the college?

Student B

- 1) How many points are there in the zero tolerance policy?
- 2) What is the name of the booklet?
- 3) What happened 40 years ago?
- 4) What is the result of all this?
- 5) What happened in 1973 and soon after?

10. Let's talk! In pairs. You are students in a café in your town. One of you is a bad disruptive pupil and has just finished yet another school detention. You have also received other punishments! The other student is a friend who is at another school who wants to find out more about the punishments etc... *5-minutes*.

11. Presentation: In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: **School punishments**. Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation to the class. The class can vote on the best presentation. Class – After the presentations go through the good and weak points on each presentation. Learn from the results.

12. Let's write an e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: *School detentions*. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

13. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) A detention _____
- b) The pupils _____
- c) The headmistress _____

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) Would you like to be a pupil at school today in your country? Explain.
- 3) Would you like to be a pupil at school in England today? Explain.
- 4) Is the headmistress in the article right?
- 5) Have you ever had a detention? If yes, explain what happened...
- 6) What is the worst sort of punishment you received at school for doing something wrong? Explain.
- 7) Should 'trendy teaching' be outlawed in England?
- 8) Should all schools get tough with pupils in England?
- 9) What three recommendations would you make to the authorities in Britain about school discipline?
- 10) Do you know anyone who has been expelled from school? Why?

Student B questions

- 1) What three bits of advice would you give the pupils at the college?
- 2) Should the cane be re-introduced in Britain?
- 3) Is or was the cane used in your country? Explain.
- 4) What is the point of a detention?
- 5) Have you ever had a detention? If yes, explain what happened.
- 6) How does the article compare to what is practised in your country?
- 7) What do you think of the 25% of young people aged 16-25 in Britain who can't get a job or can't be bothered to get a job?
- 8) What is the situation in your country like for young people getting a job?
- 9) Are young people in your country unemployable like many of those in England appear to be? What solutions can you offer?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! When you were at school!

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

20 things about when you were at school!

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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School (1)_____ recently hit the news headlines in Britain when one headmistress handed out an amazing 534 detentions in three days! Following (2)_____ by some parents of the *City of Ely Community College* in Cambridgeshire the story made the news in Britain. The detentions follow the headmistress's introduction of a 'zero (3)_____ policy' to improve the (4)_____ in her school. Catherine Jenkinson-Dix won the support of many parents after deciding to (5)_____ the misdemeanours including chewing gum, eating between lessons, smoking, carrying mobile phones, applying excessive (6)_____ and insubordination. A strict uniform policy was also announced under which individualistic touches such as odd socks or wearing (7)_____ in class would be banned. Anyone breaking the rules would be sent immediately to the school hall for five hours where they would have to read a booklet about good (8)_____.

On Monday, the first day of the policy 236 children – a fifth of pupils were punished. On the second day the figure was 183, and on the third day it was 115. By the fourth day at lunchtime the figure was just 30. Supporters of the idea said the (1)_____ figures proved it was working. But the (2)_____ divided parents, with some calling it (3)_____. Others said old-fashioned (4)_____ will be reflected in academic achievement. One mother said: "My son Jack was given a detention on Monday for talking when he was meant to be reading a book. He learned not to do it again and he hasn't been back since." The mother added, "Teenagers need guidelines and they always push (5)_____. If they know what the (6)_____ are they behave themselves. Another parent said, "There are plenty who agree what the (7)_____ is doing. Yes, the children that get detentions miss classes. But my son said that after several hours with nothing to do most of them actually want to be back in class. I think it's a stroke of (8)_____."

behaviour

make-up

standards

tolerance

complaints

punish

hoodies

detentions

diminishing

boundaries

draconian

school

crackdown

discipline

guidelines

genius

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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534 School detentions in three days! – 10th May 2011

SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	individualistic	11	boundaries
2	hoodies	12	headmistress
3	immediately	13	excessive
4	behaviour	14	punishment
5	tolerance	15	minority
6	misdemeanours	16	eradicate
7	insubordination	17	unnecessary
8	detention	18	hopefully
9	diminishing	19	disappeared
10	achievement	20	ultimately

LINKS

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1374487/Ely-school-gives-717-children-detention-4-days-rules-crackdown.html>

<http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/odd/news/a313524/school-issues-717-detentions-in-three-days.html>

<http://www.metro.co.uk/news/860306-over-700-pupils-put-in-detention-as-parents-compare-school-to-prison>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/top-stories/2011/04/08/a-zero-tolerance-school-that-gave-pupils-717-detentions-in-three-days-for-petty-offences-was-slammed-by-parents-yesterday-115875-23045486/>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: 534 School detentions in three days! School **detentions** recently hit the news headlines in Britain when one headmistress handed out an amazing 534 detentions in three days! Following **complaints** by some parents of the *City of Ely Community College* in Cambridgeshire the story made the news in Britain. The detentions follow the headmistress's introduction of a 'zero **tolerance** policy' to improve the **standards** in her school. Catherine Jenkinson-Dix won the support of many parents after deciding to **punish** the misdemeanours including chewing gum, eating between lessons, smoking, carrying mobile phones, applying excessive **make-up** and insubordination. A strict uniform policy was also announced under which individualistic touches such as odd socks or wearing **hoodies** in class would be banned. Anyone breaking the rules would be sent immediately to the school hall for five hours where they would have to read a booklet about good **behaviour**.

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