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Case Study: #27 “Zero Tolerance”

The premise of this case study is based on the policy of “Zero Tolerance” employed by a school district in regards to weapons and drugs. According to policy, all drug offenses for controlled substances and illegal drugs require a minimum one semester referral to the Behavioral Care High School. There are two students involved in this case. A boy with ADHD who brought a 5 inch long sharpened nail file to school and a senior girl who was caught taking what she claims in “allergy medication” while at school without having any physician note on file..

**Standard 3:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

I do not believe that zero tolerance policies are the most effective way to apply discipline. These types of policies are a cookie cutter approach to discipline and take away the ability of an administrator to use their knowledge and experience to make decisions in regards to discipline issues. It seems that there are many cases of the discipline being far more harsh and lacking in common sense when there is district-wide zero-tolerance policies in place.

**Standard 5:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

In this particular case, I feel the boy with the sharpened nail file should probably be dealt with along the lines of the discipline code. He has a 5 inch long nail file that has obviously been sharpened. I would like to determine through interviewing him why he feels the need to carry this weapon so I can assess whether or not there is any other issues related to this incident that need to be addressed such as bullying.

**Standard 5:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

In regards to the girl who was caught taking the unidentified white pill, if I had some latitude with applying the discipline I may be more likely to recommend a less severe punishment than removal for an entire semester to the Behavioral High School. If this is her first offense and if the pill truly was allery medication I think that a semester removal is harsh for an offence that did not involve trafficking, distributing, or taking a drug that is not illegal or controlled. I do believe she should be punished for not following procedures with regards to medication but I think it should be a more fitting punishment. If the latitude is not there, I will follow through on the discipline as established in the school handbook but I will be lobbying for a change to that code for future school years.