# Parents and students oppose strict behavioural rules at Southchurch High School



Parents and students at Southchurch High School in Southend, Essex, have expressed strong opposition to recently implemented strict behavioural rules, likening the school environment to a 'prison.' The school, which has 794 pupils and is part of the Partnership Learning Trust, introduced measures that include prohibiting students from talking while moving between classes, forbidding bathroom breaks during lessons, and issuing detentions for a variety of seemingly minor infractions, such as forgetting stationery, missing PE kit items, or losing student ID cards.

The alterations in school policy have led to reports that as many as 150 pupils have received detentions, sparking significant concern among parents. Notably, detentions have even been handed out for medical symptoms uncontrollable by students, including tics. Parents of children with special needs have voiced criticism, claiming the school's staff are neglecting the specific requirements of those students.

The controversy has gained momentum on social media platforms like TikTok, where students have shared their frustrations, including one student who revealed she received a detention after arriving late to class during a painful menstrual period. Additionally, it has been reported that toilet mirrors have been boarded up because students were spending excessive time looking into them, and that pupils are only permitted to use the bathroom during break or lunchtime, not during lessons—even when girls have started their periods.

Abbey Riley, a mother with a son in year seven at the school who has autism and ADHD, described the new rules as excessively harsh and resembling military discipline. Speaking to the Daily Mail, she said, "It's not a school anymore - it's starting to look like a prison. There is a silent transition where pupils leave one classroom and move to another in silence. If they talk, they get a detention. If they forget anything—even a little bit of uniform—they get a detention. If you don't have a tie and a blazer, you don't get lunch. It's not right." She also highlighted the negative impact on mental health caused by such restrictive rules.

Another parent, Ashley Mann, criticised the regulations as "disturbing" and said, "There are hundreds of parents up in arms about it. It's disgraceful."

Joseph Saunders, a father of two students at the school, wrote to the Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson to flag his concerns over what he describes as "draconian" rules. He said the hour-long detentions for minor offences were excessive and did not reflect the nurturing environment schools should provide.

The school was rated by Ofsted in December 2023 as requiring improvement, following a previous "inadequate" rating the year before. In response to the backlash, a spokesperson for Southchurch High School stated, "Southchurch High is on a journey of continual improvement, working tirelessly with pupils and parents to support the school's progress. We are working closely with colleagues from our trust, Partnership Learning, to introduce some tried and tested ways of further improving the school experience for pupils."

The spokesperson explained the introduction of "silent transitions" was intended to enable students to move quickly and quietly between lessons, helping them arrive ready to learn. They added, "This has worked really well at other schools in the trust, where it has proved popular with parents, pupils and staff."

A petition against these strict rules has gathered nearly 1,000 signatures, reflecting the widespread parental concern and growing dispute surrounding the school's disciplinary approach.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/23245119.southend-school-bosses-insist-parents-positive-reaction/> - This article discusses Southchurch High School's ban on physical contact among students, including hugging and holding hands, and the school's assertion of positive parental feedback.
2. <https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/20240810.southchurch-high-school-bans-pupils-toilets-lessons/> - This piece reports on Southchurch High School's policy restricting students from using toilets during lessons, requiring medical notes for exceptions, and the resulting parental criticism.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-64237779> - This BBC News article covers the ban on physical contact at Southchurch High School, including hugging and holding hands, and the school's justification for the policy.
4. <https://www.gazette-news.co.uk/news/23242923.southend-school-says-pupils-can-no-longer-touch-other/> - This article details Southchurch High School's implementation of a no-touching policy among students and the introduction of a one-way system to manage corridor congestion.
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-64237779> - This BBC News article discusses the ban on physical contact at Southchurch High School, including hugging and holding hands, and the school's assertion of positive parental feedback.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-64237779> - This BBC News article covers the ban on physical contact at Southchurch High School, including hugging and holding hands, and the school's justification for the policy.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14659367/Parents-school-prison-draconian-rules.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data