

[MUSIC IN]

[INTRO IN]

ABORTION, LGBT RIGHTS, GUN CONTROL, THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC, RACISM, CHILD HUNGER, WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

[INTRO OUT]

[NARRATION IN]

YOU'RE LISTENING TO SOCIALLY AWKWARD, A PODCAST EXPLORING THE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES THAT STUDENTS CARE MOST ABOUT. THIS WEEK'S EPISODE INVOLVES DRESS CODE.

[NARRATION OUT]

[MUSIC OUT]

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DRESS CODED BEFORE?

I GOT DRESS CODED ACTUALLY MY SOPHOMORE YEAR. I WAS RUNNING BACK INTO THE BUILDING AFTER CROSS COUNTRY AND I WAS ONLY WEARING SOCKS BECAUSE I HAD TO GO FIND MY SHOES, TO GO CHANGE, BECAUSE I HAD TO RUN RIGHT AFTER AND SWITCH OUT REALLY QUICK. AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN I GET DRESS CODED FOR NOT WEARING SHOES, AND THEY KICKED ME OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDING, AND I WAS LIKE, CAN SOMEBODY BRING ME SHOES?

I WAS AT MY LOCKER AND I WAS GETTING DIFFERENT BINDERS AND HE JUST CAME UP BEHIND ME AND TAPPED MY SHOULDER. HE WAS LIKE, "WHAT YOU'RE

WEARING IS INAPPROPRIATE AND YOU NEED TO CHANGE.” AND I WAS SCARED SO I WAS LIKE “OKAY” AND I WENT AND CHANGED.

I WAS GOING TO SRT WITH ONE OF MY FRIENDS AND I WAS WALKING DOWN THE HALLWAY AND I WAS WEARING A SHIRT THAT BARELY SHOWED MY STOMACH, IT WAS MAYBE, TWO CENTIMETERS THAT SHOWED MY STOMACH. THERE WAS A TEACHER STANDING OUTSIDE OF HER ROOM AND SHE GOT SO MAD. SHE WAS LIKE, “YOU CAN’T WEAR THAT HERE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING WEARING THIS DISGRACE?” I WAS LIKE, OH, SORRY I’M WEARING THESE HIGH-WAISTED JEANS, I DIDN’T THINK IT WOULD BE A PROBLEM. AND SHE SAID “OH WELL DO YOU HAVE A JACKET WITH YOU?” I SAID NO, MY JACKET’S IN MY LOCKER, WHICH WAS ALL THE WAY IN THE SECOND FLOOR E-ROOMS AT THE TIME.

I WAS IN SEVENTH GRADE, SO OF COURSE I WAS TERRIFIED, AND I WAS VERY SHY AT THE TIME, NOT ANYMORE BUT, HE WAS LIKE “IS THAT WHAT YOU’RE WEARING TO SCHOOL TODAY?” AND I WAS LIKE, YES, I’M AT SCHOOL. HE LOOKS ME DEAD IN THE EYES AND SAYS, “YOU NEED TO GO CHANGE.” I WAS LIKE, WOW, I DIDN’T KNOW IT WAS THAT BIG OF A DEAL. SO I WENT, AND I THOUGHT I HAD A SWEATSHIRT IN MY LOCKER AND I DIDN’T SO I HAD TO GO HOME AND CHANGE AND COME BACK TO SCHOOL.

[MUSIC IN]

AS YOU CAN TELL, IT WASN’T EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO FIND GIRLS WHO HAD BEEN DRESS CODED IN THE SCHOOL. ON THE OTHER HAND, EVERY TIME I ASKED A BOY ABOUT IF HE HAD BROKEN THE DRESS CODE, THE ANSWER WAS ALWAYS

[“NO’S IN]

[“NO’S OUT”]

I STARTED TO WONDER IF THERE WAS A REASON BEHIND SUCH A DISCREPANCY, AND IT TURNS OUT THERE IS. THE DRESS CODE AT CARMEL, LIKE MANY OTHER HIGH SCHOOLS, IS VERY FOCUSED AROUND WHAT GIRLS CAN OR CANNOT WEAR. FOR EXAMPLE,

THE LENGTH OF SHIRTS AND TOPS MUST BE LONG ENOUGH TO ALLOW THEM TO BE TUCKED INTO THE STUDENT’S PANTS, SKIRT, OR SHORTS.

BODY PIERCINGS THAT ATTRACT ATTENTION OR INTERFERE WITH LEARNING AND THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS MAY BE INAPPROPRIATE.

GARMENTS SUCH AS SLIPPERS, PAJAMAS, SHORT SKIRTS AND SHORTS, HALTER TOPS, THOSE WHICH REVEAL BARE MIDRIFTS OR BACKS, TUBE TOPS, SEE-THROUGH TOPS, TANK TOPS, THOSE WHICH CONTAIN SPAGHETTI STRAPS, AND GARMENTS WITH PLUNGING OR REVEALING NECKLINES ARE NOT ALLOWED.

OF COURSE, ALL OF THESE POLICIES ARE VIRTUALLY USELESS UNLESS THEY’RE ENFORCED.

[MUSIC OUT]

HAVE YOU EVER DRESS CODED ANYONE BEFORE?

YES, I HAVE. ONLY A FEW TIMES.

OKAY SO WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN? OR WHEN DID THE MOST RECENT TIME HAPPEN?

I HAVEN'T DONE IT THIS YEAR YET, BUT LAST YEAR I DRESS CODED A FEW INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL I SAY WERE SHOWING TOO MUCH REAL ESTATE, THAT'S HOW I SAY IT IN MY CLASSROOM.

WHAT WERE THEY WEARING AT THE TIME?

SOMETHING THAT WAS A LITTLE TOO SHORT. I THINK IT WAS ONE OF THOSE JUMPERS, THAT SHE WAS WEARING. JUST, SHOWING TOO MUCH THAT THE REST OF US DIDN'T NEED TO SEE.

SO, HOW DID YOU APPROACH THEM? WHAT DID YOU SAY TO THEM? WHAT DID YOU TELL THEM TO DO?

I JUST QUIETLY WENT TO HER AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS WHEN STUDENTS WERE GETTING SETTLED IN A DOING AN INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY. I WENT UP TO HER NICELY AND SAID I NEED YOU TO VISIT THE OFFICE YOU'RE SHOWING A LITTLE TOO MUCH REAL ESTATE FOR MY CLASSROOM, I'D LIKE YOU TO FIND SOMETHING ELSE TO WEAR FOR THE DAY.

DO YOU THINK THE DRESS CODE PREVENTS SOME STUDENTS FROM LEARNING, IF THEY GET DRESS CODED AND HAVE TO LEAVE CLASS, OR WOULD YOU SAY THAT'S NOT REALLY AN ISSUE?

I THINK THAT'S AN ISSUE ANY TIME A STUDENT HAS TO LEAVE CLASS, ANY TIME THEY'RE NOT IN DIRECT INSTRUCTION, OR ABLE TO WORK WITH ANOTHER STUDENT, YES I BELIEVE THAT CAN INTERRUPT THE LEARNING PROCESS. IF THIS HAPPENS TO BE FOR A DRESS CODE VIOLATION, I BELIEVE THAT THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WOULD BE DISRUPTED AS WELL.

I DO NOT SEE KIDS BEING UNCOMFORTABLY FORCED INTO UNIFORM BEHAVIOR, IT SEEMS TO BE SOMETHING PEOPLE CAN ACCOMMODATE RATHER SIMPLY, IT'S RATHER BROAD, RATHER GENERAL. WHILE I UNDERSTAND THERE ARE CERTAIN, SPECIFIC ISSUES, IT KIND OF GOES RIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE. TRYING NOT TO BE TOO FORCEFUL BUT AT THE SAME TIME ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THERE ARE LIBERTIES IN HOW PEOPLE DRESS.

ALL OF THE TEACHERS I INTERVIEWED HAD MIXED OPINIONS ON THE TOPIC OF DRESS CODE. SOME THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE ENFORCED MORE OFTEN, SOME THOUGHT IT WAS TOO STRICT, AND SOME DIDN'T SEE IT AS AN ISSUE. TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT THAT DRESS CODE HAS ON STUDENTS I INTERVIEWED THE PARENTS OF KIDS WHO GO TO THE HIGH SCHOOL.

I WOULD FIRST ASK HER, WHAT CLASS SHE WAS IN AND MAYBE WHAT WAS GOING ON DURING THE DAY, SUCH AS HAVING A PRESENTATION. AND THEN ASK HER WHAT THE TEACHER SAID, OR MORE OF ASK WHAT THE TEACHER EXPECTS FROM THE STUDENT. IT DEPENDS HOW OLD MY CHILD IS, HONESTLY, ON HOW YOU WOULD RESPOND, JUST BECAUSE DIFFERENT AGES HAVE DIFFERENT MENTALITIES. YOUNGER MEANS SIMPLE, OLDER MEANS MAYBE WE CAN WORK TOGETHER AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS.

I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT SCHOOLS HAVE RULES, AND HAVE BOUNDARIES. ALL CHILDREN NEED BOUNDARIES, AND NEED TO STAY WITHIN THOSE BOUNDARIES AND UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE RULES TO FOLLOW. DRESS CODE IS PART OF THAT. I FEEL LIKE IF THERE IS NO DRESS CODE THAN CHILDREN WILL BE PUSHING THOSE BOUNDARIES AND GOING OUTSIDE THE

BOUNDARIES AND WEARING THINGS THAT ARE DISTRACTING OR INAPPROPRIATE FOR OTHER CHILDREN TO BE SEEING PARTS OF THEM THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE SEEING. SO IF MY CHILD HAS CHOSEN TO DO THAT THAN THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE TO PAY THE CONSEQUENCES FOR STEPPING OUTSIDE THOSE BOUNDARIES. JUST AS THEY WOULD IN LIFE. BECAUSE LIFE HAS BOUNDARIES.

IF ONE-DAY CATE OR I CAME HOME AND WE WERE CLEARLY REALLY UPSET BECAUSE WE HAD BEEN DRESS CODED WHAT WOULD YOUR ADVICE BE TO US? WHAT WOULD YOU TELL US TO DO?

I THINK MY FIRST FEELING WOULD BE THAT I HAD FAILED YOU AS A MOTHER. BECAUSE I SEE YOU AND YOUR SISTER WALK OUT THE DOOR EVERY DAY BEFORE SCHOOL, AND I WOULD'VE FELT THAT I HAD LET YOU DOWN OR MADE A BAD DECISION BY ALLOWING YOU TO WALK OUT THE DOOR AND GO TO SCHOOL IF A SCHOOL OFFICIAL THOUGHT IT WAS THAT INAPPROPRIATE THAT YOU WOULD BE DRESS CODED.

[MUSIC IN]

IF YOU COULDN'T TELL, THAT LAST PERSON WAS MY MOM, AND SOMETHING SHE SAID REALLY STRUCK A CHORD WITH ME.

I THINK MY FIRST FEELING WOULD BE THAT I HAD FAILED YOU AS A MOTHER. THIS IS HOW A LOT OF PARENTS FEEL WHEN THEIR CHILD GETS DRESS CODED. IT'S EMBARRASSING, NOT ONLY FOR THE STUDENT BUT FOR THE PARENT AS WELL. THIS IS WHY WE DON'T NEED TO CHANGE IN ITSELF, BUT WE NEED TO

CHANGE THE WAY IT'S ENFORCED. THIS STARTS IN TEACHERS DISCIPLINING STUDENTS IN A WAY THAT DOESN'T HUMILIATE THEM. THAT'S ALL FOR THIS EPISODE OF SOCIALLY AWKWARD. IF YOU REALLY ENJOYED THE MUSIC IN THIS PODCAST ALL OF IT IS PLAYED BY LEE ROSEVERE. FROM 91.3 WHJE, THIS HAS BEEN MADDIE HARDEN.