## Line up in the hall, open your shirts, show your bras – Real instructions from one Japanese school

Dress code check has people in Japan upset.

A number of Japanese school rules have been under increasing criticism over the last year for being outdated or illogical, and the one getting the most attention these days involves [**students’ underwear**](https://soranews24.com/2021/03/08/majority-of-nagasaki-high-schools-and-middle-schools-have-white-underwear-only-rules-study-finds/). As part of their dress codes, a number of schools have regulations in place that say students must wear white underwear.

However, school uniforms are, obviously, already designed so as not to show students’ underwear. Unfortunately, rather than take it on faith that the unseen underwear conforms with the rule, some schools exercise their authority in performing spot tests. One method is to have a teacher can [check the color of bra straps pulled up through a student’s collar](https://soranews24.com/2020/11/17/japanese-middle-school-criticized-for-pulling-out-girls-bra-straps-to-check-their-color/), but one school in Fukuoka Prefecture has used an even more shocking method.

According to a student who was interviewed by the Fukuoka Bar Association as part of a study of school rules in the prefecture, girls at the school were told to line up in a school hallway, standing side-to-side. They were then told to unbutton and open their shirts while a teacher came by and inspected their bras to make sure they were solid white.

Though you couldn’t really call the situation better if the students’ panties were checked as well, the fact that the underwear check apparently only involved their bras strongly implies that it was only girls who were checked to see if they were in compliance with the dress code. The semi-logical reason would be that boys’ uniforms, by nature of having pants, mean that their underwear would never be seen anyway, but then the same should at least be true for girls’ bras, which are always covered by their uniforms’ blouses.

▼ Honestly, that seems like something professional educators should be able to understand.

As for the check taking place in a hallway, Japanese schools generally don’t have locker rooms for general P.E. classes (which is partially why individual club rooms are so often seen in high school sports anime and TV dramas). However, classrooms themselves are often used as changing room before/after P.E. class, and if the school was dead-set on performing a bra color check, doing it in a classroom would have at least afforded greater privacy than the hallway.

Other troubling revelations from the bar association’s study included a female student saying that her school’s underwear check was performed by a male teacher and at least one case of a students whose underwear didn’t conform to the dress code being told to remove it (it’s unclear if she was given dress code-compliant underwear to change into or had to spend the rest of the day with no bra at all).

Online reactions to the report have been a mixture of frustration and anger:

“Disgusting.”
“I feel so sorry for those students.”
“These schools are run by perverts.”
“They should put an immediate stop to underwear checks.”

While an immediate abolition is probably too much to hope for, it does indeed look like school underwear checks’ days are numbered, and [Fukuoka’s neighbor, Saga Prefecture, has already said it will have no more checks as of this spring](https://soranews24.com/2021/03/26/public-schools-in-japans-saga-prefecture-will-no-longer-regulate-check-students-underwear-color/).

## Japanese high school teachers forcibly cut off hair that was “too long” from 44 students

Because nothing promotes a healthy learning environment like traumatizing students with scissors in front of their peers.

We’ve seen before that some Japanese schools have gone overboard when it comes to making sure kids follow dress code, even going to far as to [make one student dye her naturally-brown hair black](https://soranews24.com/2017/10/28/naturally-brown-haired-osaka-student-sues-government-for-forcing-her-to-dye-her-hair-black/) to look like everyone else.

And now it seems that the hair-obsession is continuing. It has recently come to light that six teachers at Mizuhashi High School in Toyama Prefecture used scissors to cut the hair of 44 students that was deemed too long and against the school dress code.

▼ It probably looked something like this, except with more tears,
angry admonishings from the teacher, and silence from horrified classmates.

According to the school, the “hair cuts” began in April last year and continued up to last month. The school held a monthly “uniform check,” during which time students’ hair length was examined. Students with hair deemed longer than acceptable were warned, but if they did not get it cut outside of school, the teachers would become judge, jury and executioner and cut it themselves whenever they decided.

It’s unclear whether any of the teachers had haircut training, but we’re going to go on a limb and assume that giving the students a nice cut was not at the top of their priority list, simply slicing it to the mandated length was.

The school claims that they received permission from the students before cutting their hair, but something about that still feels wrong. What are you going to say to your teacher, someone who has authority over you, when they start coming at you with scissors?

▼ When your two choices are basically “let them have their way
with your hair” or “drop out,” it’s not much of a choice.

Principal Yasuhiro Nakada has made a statement, saying: “This is not something that should happen. From now on we will have management staff present during the uniform checks to ensure that it does not happen again.”

That makes it sound like he was unaware it was happening. But seeing as this has been going on for almost a year and involved 44 students, that’s hard to imagine.

Here’s how Japanese netizens reacted:

“Really? We’re still enforcing these old, pointless school rules?”
“Those six teachers are idiots. They should have their licenses revoked.”
“I mean, is that really the way to handle a kid who refuses to cut their hair?”
“I heard about this. Apparently the 44 students were both boys and girls. So horrible.”

While some Japanese schools have made great strides by [allowing students to wear whichever gender uniform they’d like](https://soranews24.com/2018/02/09/japanese-public-school-to-allow-male-students-to-wear-skirts-chest-ribbons-as-part-of-uniform/), others are still stuck in the past by [forcing them to do after-school activities they have no interest in](https://soranews24.com/2018/01/11/teacher-says-japanese-schools-mandatory-extracurricular-activity-rules-dont-benefit-students/).

What will the future of Japanese schools hold? Hopefully more acceptance and less forced haircuts and forced hair-dyeing.

## “Students are only allowed three sneezes in class” Japanese people share their worst school rules

Things are so bad, an organization was formed to investigate these ridiculous rules.

We’ve seen a lot of bizarre rules in Japanese schools, everything from [students being forced to bow and kneel to their teachers in a cult-like ceremony](https://soranews24.com/2019/03/06/japanese-high-school-requires-teens-to-kneel-and-bow-for-teaches-receives-harsh-online-backlash/), to [a girl with naturally-brown hair having to dye her hair black](https://soranews24.com/2017/10/28/naturally-brown-haired-osaka-student-sues-government-for-forcing-her-to-dye-her-hair-black/)… ironically to enforce the school’s “no dyed hair” policy.

In fact, it was after that dyed hair event that the NPO Burakku Kosoku wo Nakuso! (Let’s Eliminate “Black” School Rules!) was established. Here the “black” is the same as in [“black companies,”](https://soranews24.com/2018/11/04/spend-a-shift-working-in-a-terrible-soul-crushing-japanese-company-at-this-special-tokyo-event/) organizations that have no concern for the well-being of their workers—or in this case, students.

After running a survey last March, they found that two-thirds of middle schoolers and one-half of high schoolers have experienced some form of “black” school rules. Here’s some of the examples that were given:

“Students can only wear certain colors of underwear.”

“Students are not allowed to have ponytails.”

“Students are only allowed three sneezes in class.”

“Students must get permission from a teacher to cut their hair over summer vacation.”

“Male and female students must have two meters (6.5 feet) of distance between them.”

“Students are not allowed to wear scarves during exams.”

Additionally, thesese aren’t just isolated cases in one or two schools. the survey also found that twenty percent of high school students with naturally-brown hair were forced to dye it black at some point, and that one out of every six middle school students had an [official school rule regarding the color of their underwear](https://soranews24.com/2016/10/27/tokyo-junior-high-school-demands-students-wear-white-underwear-as-part-of-dress-code/).

Here’s how Japanese netizens responded to the ridiculous rules:

“That’s just school faculty being stupid.”

“If there are too many strict rules, that will just result in less of them being followed.”

“We had fingernail inspections and made us cut off any white sections.”

“Coats and *gloves* were forbidden at my school, even on days so cold the trains stopped.”

“For the sneezing thing, I guess you could just hold them all in for one giant sneeze?”

“I’ve sneezed 10 times in one minute before. I’d get in so much trouble.”

Sneezing strategies aside, it’d be one thing if these school rules were just relics of the past that weren’t actually enforced. But the fact that so many students have had negative experiences with them shows that they may be reaching a breaking point.

Perhaps Japan could take a page out of [Finland’s school system](https://soranews24.com/2017/12/10/students-in-finland-the-worlds-best-educated-country-react-to-japans-harsh-school-rules/), where the students are not only the best educated in the world, but also have the most freedom. Not only can they lie down in class, study what they like, and have almost no homework, but they can even sneeze whenever they want! Imagine that.