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Saturday 10a et



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-

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Saturday 2a et



-

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February 01, 2010

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February 01, 2010

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- [Military](#)

May 17, 2010

- [Religion](#)

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Virginia School Stands By Decision to Suspend Student Who Opened Door

Published March 03, 2011

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A Virginia middle school is standing by its decision after some parents said it went too far when it suspended a student for opening a door for a visitor – an action administrators say violated the school district’s strict security policy.

Southampton Middle School in Courtland, Va., issued a one-day suspension to the student last week after he allowed a woman into the school by opening an exterior door. The school district recently implemented a \$10,800 security system that requires all visitors to ring a buzzer and appear on an outside camera before entry into the building. Students are not permitted at any time to open doors for outside visitors.

"A student was suspended for one day for opening a secured door, which was part of the security system for an individual after students had been instructed not to open the doors," said Southampton County Superintendent Charles Turner, who declined to release the student’s name.

But the punishment has angered some parents, who claim the child knew the visitor, the Tidewater News reports. The newspaper reportedly received an anonymous e-mail saying the “A” student recognized the woman and opened the door because “her hands were full.”

A person claiming to be the child’s parent also wrote on the newspaper’s website that: “We are going to handle this situation as soon as possible and will expect for his record to not only be expunged, but an apology as well.”

"We have tried to teach our children to be kind and courteous and then they are punished for that behavior. What kind of example are we setting in our school systems?" the person wrote under the username "cbjackson."

But parents like Pam Haydu, whose children attend Southampton High School, said she agrees with the strict security measures in place.

“I feel like it’s a good thing as a parent,” she said.

Turner told FoxNews.com that parents were notified of the security policy in a letter. He also said administrators at five district schools informed students of the new policy, including the consequences of breaking such rules.

Turner declined to comment on whether the child knew the visitor, saying only, “The person was not a school employee.” He also said information in some local press reports is “not accurate,” but did not elaborate.

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