

*Let us know what you think of school rules? Are they a good thing, or too strict? How would you vote if your school gave the students a say on whether there should be rules or not? At Katie's School, thanks a little magical influence on the head teacher, they had a chance to see what life would be like without any rules.*

Story

by

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Thanks to Makison who suggested in the comments that Katie should try cancelling all the school rules.

## Katie Cancels the School Rules

Hello, This is Natasha, and I'm here with the latest story about katie the witch.



Katie's form teacher, Miss Vile, has a motto. It is this: "The Rules are the Rules."

If anyone ever complains about a punishment by saying: "But Miss, that's not fair," it is as if a dark cloud appears in Miss Vile's head, the ground trembles a little, and she repeats her favourite phrase.

"The Rules are the Rules."

For instance, she said it when she gave Isabelle a detention for being five minutes late. Isabelle explained that she had been helping a little boy to visit the sick bay because he had fallen over and cut his knee.

"That may be so, Isabelle," said Miss Vile, "but the Rules are the Rules."

Rishi had his phone switched on in class because his mother was in hospital having a baby, and his dad had promised to text him to say if he had a new brother or sister. When the phone vibrated with a message, Miss Vile confiscated it.

"The Rules are the Rules," said Miss Vile, and Rishi did not find out the news until he got home. It was a baby girl by the way.

Opinions were divided about Miss Vile. Some people said that she was a good teacher because she was strict and did not stand for any nonsense. Others thought that she was simply unfair. Katie's opinion was sort of in the middle, until one day Miss Vile went too far. She gave Isis a detention because her mother took her to a doctor's appointment half an hour before school ended. She had called the school secretary in advance to arrange it all. The next morning, Isis brought a note in from the doctor, but Miss Vile gave her a detention all the same.

"It would have been better if your mother had consulted me," she said, "and I would have explained that it is not permitted to leave school early. You know – the Rules are the Rules."

Isis isn't a complicated person. The only thing you need to know about her is this – she's perfect. Isis has perfect features, perfect taste, perfect homework, and above all, at the end of term she has a perfect school report. She never gets into trouble. Not ever. It is unthinkable.

When Isis sat down at her desk, she had to rummage around in her bag on the floor for a tissue. She needed one to wipe away a tear from her eye. Her best friend Katie sat and fumed on her behalf.

"Katie, why do you look so cross?" asked Miss Vile. "Did you get out of the wrong side of bed this morning?"

"No Miss," said Katie. "I'm not cross, I'm just, er, thoughtful."

"Would you care to share one of your thoughts with us?" asked Miss Vile.

"No Miss," said Katie. "I wouldn't. They are private."

In fact, her thought was that Miss Vile had gone way beyond being strict. She was turning into a tyrant.

"Well Katie," said Miss Vile. "You shall have time to think in detention."

"Why Miss?" asked Katie agasp.

"Disobedience is against the rules," replied the teacher.

On Friday, after school, Katie and Isis reported to the detention room. The punishment was not so bad, because they were allowed to get on with their weekend homework. But Katie could not concentrate. Miss Vile was right. Detention gave her time to think.

"Do we really need all these rules?" she wondered as she looked at Mr Smart who was marking maths homework. "I think we might just all behave better towards one another if we weren't bossed around."

Her dad was a scientist. When he wondered about something, he made an experiment in his laboratory at the university. Katie thought: "Magic isn't just for fun. It's meant to be useful. Let's use it to test my theory. I might just make the school, and perhaps the world a better place, and it will all be because Miss Vile gave Isis and me detention. When something unjust happens, you've got to make sure that something good happens too."

It was lucky it was the weekend, because she was free to work on her experimental spell. By the time she went to bed on Sunday night, she was ready. As she fell asleep she thought: "This is going to be the most interesting week in the whole history of the school."

If there was an hour at school that was more boring than a Friday detention, it was the assembly on Monday morning. Some of it just made you want to cringe. Everyone had to stand and sing the school song:

**"We are sisters and brothers.**

**We respect one another.**

**We show love, no spite.**

**We just do what's right.**

**It's good to know,**

**that everyday we grow,**

take pride in our youth,  
hate lies and tell truth.  
Cos it's cool, to follow the rules  
You're no fool, to love your school.."

There had been a time when Isis had been only too happy to sing these words because she believed it was important to have a good moral character. But that Monday morning, she stood with the bolshy kids, like Isabelle and Samantha, and opened and closed her mouth without any sound coming out.

"Sing up! Sing up!" called out Mrs. Hepworth when they got to the part about loving school. A few of the younger children caterwauled enthusiastically and tunelessly, while the older ones more or less rasped as if there was an epidemic of sore throats. Miss Vile's eyes scanned the rows of students to see who wasn't putting enough welly into the chorus. Katie sung out loud.

"I might as well," she thought. "It's going to be for the last time."

Her experimental spell would soon take effect. The head boy read out the sports results, which seemed to take him about six cricket seasons to mumble through. The head girl announced the week's awards for hard work and good behaviour. For the first time ever, Samantha got a certificate. It was for citizenship. She went bright red with embarrassment as she went up to collect it. Then at last, Mrs. Hepworth cleared her throat:

"I have an important announcement. Everyone must listen very carefully as I am going to say this only once. We have decided that the school will take part in a social experiment. So I trust that all of you will be a credit to yourselves and to your school. We are counting on everyone to act like grownups. From 9.00 am today, all the school rules are cancelled."

A gasp went around the hall. Miss Vile stood up and said:

"Did I hear you correctly, head teacher?"

"Miss Vile, for your benefit, and for the benefit of anyone else who was not paying attention, I shall repeat myself once only. From 9.00 am today, there are no more school rules. I shall place the red book, which is on the shelf behind my desk, into the recycling bin. May you all live up to this challenge."

A couple of moments of stunned silence crept past before somebody started to clap and a huge cheer went up all round the assembly hall. Miss Vile waved her arms frantically and called out:

"You heard the head teacher, it's not 9.00 am yet."

The students filed out of the assembly in good order, and walked to their first lesson just as they usually did.

Katie's first lesson was French with Miss Parris. Katie looked up at the clock. The hand touched 9 and Miss Parris said:

"Bonjour."

And the class replied, "bonjour Mademoiselle."

In fact, it was a perfect lesson until the very end when, at 9.35 am, the bell should have rung, but it didn't. Katie put her hand up and said, "excuse me, it's time to go to our next lesson."

Miss Parris replied, "alors, au revoir."

A few people replied, "au revoir," but most dashed for the door. This was perfectly normal. In the corridor, Isis asked, "do you think it's some sort of joke about the rules being cancelled?"

Katie replied, "no, I've never seen Mrs.. Hepworth so serious."

Samantha called out, "anyone got some gum on them?" Chewing gum was illegal, or at least it had been until 9.00 am that morning.

Miss Vile was standing sentry at the end of the corridor, as usual, scrutinizing the children with her piercing blue eyes. As Isabelle walked past, she took out a mobile

phone and started to text Danny. She held it up to Miss Vile and said, "want to see what I wrote, Miss?"

Miss Vile glanced at the screen. It read, "didn't you look dishy in French today?"

"He did too," she added. Miss Vile's mouth was zipped tight. Her head quivered slightly. It was obvious that she wanted to commit murder.

The next lesson was History. Five minutes into the lesson, Mr. Old was forced to say, "Danny, could you please stop humming? It's distracting the other students."

"But I'm humming the Dam Busters, sir. It goes with the lesson." The lesson was indeed about the Second World War, and the tune was the theme to an old war film that Danny's dad had shown him.

A few people, including Isabelle and Samantha laughed, and Mr. Old looked agitated, but Isis said, "Danny, he asked you politely, and we would be grateful if you would be quiet because some of us want to learn."

Danny pulled a face and said, "nobody cares what you think Miss Perfect Pants!"

For a moment, the lesson was about to veer out of control, but Hamish, who had a black belt in a Scottish Martial Art, rose up and said, "if you don't want to learn Danny, why don't you take a walk?"

"Sure, I've got better things to do than listen to this out of date stuff," said Danny – and he left the room.

After that, Mr. Old was able to carry on because actually most people wanted to learn about the war. But judging by the sounds of singing, laughter and furniture moving in the geography class next door, Mr. North's lesson on Continental Drift was not going too well.

By lunch time, most of the teachers in the staff room looked like they were ready for the long summer break. But, it was only the second week of term. After lunch, during English, Rishi's phone rang. He hastily silenced it. "I'm sorry everyone, I forgot to turn it off," he said.

Mr Page smiled. "Thank you Rishi, that's a nice apology. I'd be grateful if everyone else could check that their phones are switched off too." Just then, his own phone beeped and trembled inside his jacket.

"Whoops," he said. "My turn to say sorry."

In fact, many of the classes were well behaved and the children carried on learning as usual. Others were not so peaceful. A chemistry lesson went rather badly wrong. There was a resounding KABOOM! that could be heard all across the school. But on the positive side, everyone was sensible enough to leave the building and stand in line in the playground while the fire brigade went in and put out the blaze. The drama made a satisfying end to the first school day without any rules. It took a few days for most people to feel really relaxed. On Friday, Charlie brought his dog to school. Her name was Pearl and she was a black labradoodle which is a trendy mix between a labrador and a poodle. She was a hit with almost everyone, except Miss Vile who had a phobia of dogs. During morning registration, she kept glancing at Pearl and shuddering. At last she could not help herself. She said, "rules or no rules, if that beast bites somebody, Charlie, I'm going to kick up a fuss."

"But Miss, she wouldn't hurt a flea," he replied. And to be honest, it was obvious that she was a gentle family animal. But at the word 'flea', Miss Vile instinctively scratched under her arm which made the class fall into fits of laughter. As they were leaving for the first lesson, Katie said, "Miss Vile, I'm sorry that you look so unhappy."

"Thank you Katie," said Miss Vile, "that is very sympathetic of you."

The formerly formidable teacher did indeed look somewhat strained. Her forehead had more lines than geometry lesson. Her eyes looked like those little wheels that go round and round when your computer freezes up. Her voice strained like a car that won't start properly.

"I am struggling to do my job. I might have to resign. I can't take much more of this. You see rules are not all without reason, Katie. What if somebody was allergic

to dogs? Or what if somebody brought in a pet tarantula? It's not that we don't like cute, furry animals. It's just that in a school with 900 students in it, we have to think of everyone and every possible thing that might go wrong."

"But if you don't mind me saying so," said Katie, "teachers can go a bit crazy with the rules -handing out detentions for every little thing, and then people start to think the rules are just silly and unfair."

It was the first time that Katie had ever been able to speak to a teacher like that – just spitting out the straight truth. When the school had rules, you had to be very careful what you said. If you went around saying what you really thought, you'd be in detention until the end of time. Miss Vile, instead of becoming angry, just sat down wearily behind her desk looking defeated.

"Perhaps you are right," she admitted with a sigh, and maybe, Katie thought, with just a touch of remorse for some of the unfair detentions she had handed out. Katie put her hand on her teacher's shoulder and said, "don't give up yet. Mrs.. Hepworth said it was an experiment. It might be over soon."

At break time, the school secretary had to call an ambulance. A boy had climbed the tree that grew at the far end of the playground. He had managed to make it half way up before a branch broke, causing him to fall down, snapping twigs and getting scratched as he tumbled. He landed badly and broke his ankle.

In the staff room, the teachers muttered that the boy's parents were bound to sue the school. But they were lucky, because actually his dad said his son only had himself to blame.

The following Monday, Mr Plank had to whitewash the front wall because Danny had sprayed some rude words onto it to impress Isabelle and Samantha.

Lunch was starting to resemble feeding time at the zoo, with people throwing mashed potato and custard pudding at the prefects. The prefects had stopped wearing their special ties, but everyone knew who they were and threw stuff at them anyway.



Some children started turning up later and later, so that the first class of the day was almost half empty. Actually that was quite a good thing, because the ones who got to school on time wanted to learn, and the ones who were late were the trouble-makers.

As for uniform, well Isis was the only one who bothered with it these days. Some people looked like shades of the underworld, hanging around the playground with hoodies over their heads. Others flaunted bling and bright lipstick.

"Is that Samantha?" asked Katie. "You can hardly recognize her. She's wearing so much fake tan that her face is color-coordinated with her handbag!"

There were plenty more horrific crimes against fashion. Isabelle bleached her hair peroxide blonde. Danny wore brick-red trousers. Lizzy came to school in her pyjamas.

"There should at least be a rule against bad taste," complained Isis.

The Student Council met on Friday lunchtime. Hamish called the meeting to order and asked if anyone had any views on the school with no rules.

Danny said: "Let's pass a rule that all the teachers and prefects have to wear toilet seats over their heads."

A few people laughed. Isis said, "I think school uniform is a good idea, because everyone looks the same and nobody's in competition with anybody else."

"I agree, uniform is convenient," added Carrie. But not many agreed.

"Can't we stop people making trouble in lessons?" asked Rishi.

"Naaa," said Danny. "If lessons are boring, the teachers shouldn't complain when people do their own thing."

"But I want to pass my exams," said Josh.

"Me too" agreed Imran and Carrie.

"Exams are for losers," said Samantha, to wide agreement.

Russell, who played the role of the school guru, put a finger in the air as if he was asking to speak. He didn't wait for anyone's permission though, as that would have been quite out of character.

"The way I see it, a few rules are hard to get out of. If a bird flies over your head and drops its load, you're going to get splattered, man. That's the law of gravity. But 99% of the rules are just made up. This week will go down in history as Freedom Week. It's shown how silly most of those "Don't, Dos and No Nos" actually are. Just one example – Charlie brought in his dog, and I thought that was one of the best things that ever happened to this school."

Charlie smiled from ear to ear and quite a few people clapped.

"But what if somebody's allergic to dog fur?" asked Katie.

"Then they're not in tune with nature," replied Russell.

Angelica said: "My cousin loves animals and works for a vet but she has to take pills because cats make her sneeze."

"But that's her choice," said Katie. "And what if somebody brought a pet tarantula to school would that be okay?"

"Yeah bring on the hairy spiders," said Russell but not many people heard him above the general chorus of: "Eeeeeee Yuk!"

Isabelle sat twisting her blonde hair. She said: "Why do you love rules so much Katie? You're a freak. You don't even obey the laws of nature."

"I don't love rules," replied Katie. "I think some of them are good, and some of them are silly. I just want to know what everyone else wants. Not just the people with big mouths, but everyone who comes to this school. Do we want rules or don't we? Why don't we vote on it?"

"A student who votes for rules is a turkey voting for Christmas," said Russell." The intelligent people say rules are a waste of time. But if we ask everyone, the stupid people vote too. Democracy is a waste of time, guys."

"Yeah, anyone who votes for rules is a drongo," said Samantha.

"And a freak," added Isabelle,

"And a loser," shouted Georgie.

Some people at the back started chanting: "Lose the rules – No more school – lose the rules – no more school!"

Hamish called out: "Quiet everyone, Quiet!" and a few people started saying: "Quiet, let him speak."

Hamish had a certain authority. He said: "At the end of school tonight I'm going to stand by the front gate. I'll be holding a ballot box. On the way out everyone should drop a piece of paper into the box with one word on it. Yes for Rules, No for No Rules. The vote shall be secret so that nobody feels bullied and can say what they really want. I shall count the votes tonight, and on Monday morning I will announce the result in assembly."

"How do we know you won't cheat?" asked Russell.

"If you want to count the votes with me you can," replied Hamish.

"No man, I'm busy tonight – washing my hair," replied Russell.

On Monday morning, the school gathered for the first assembly since all the rules had been cancelled. Mrs. Hepworth asked, "shall we sing the school song?"

There was a chorus of "Nooooooooo!"

"Oh dear, I didn't realise it was so unpopular," she said. "Well there's no point in hearing the sports results, because the football match ended in a punch up, and the referee had to run and hide. I suppose that's what happens when you don't

have any rules. So without further ado, I shall ask Hamish to give you the news you are all waiting for – the result of the big vote on the School Rules."

Hamish walked across the stage and spoke into the microphone. "The result of the referendum on School Rules is as Follows. 'Yes', 522 votes, 'No', 399 votes. I hereby declare that the school has voted in favour of bringing back the rules."

Only a few people clapped, and there was a lot of booing and jeering and some chanting of, "losers, losers."

Isis said, "that's odd. You would think that the majority would clap" and Katie replied, "I think the people who voted for the rules are better mannered than the no voters."

Mrs. Hepworth announced that from 9.00 am the rules would again take effect. The one thing that everyone could agree on was that they had never seen Miss Vile looking so happy.

And that was the Story of Katie Cancels the school rules. Bertie would like to thank Makison who wrote to us via the comments on Storynory some time ago asking what would happen if Katie cancelled all the school rules. If you have a suggestion for a story, drop by at [storynory.com](http://storynory.com) and leave us your idea in the comments. You never know bertie might pick up your idea and run with it!