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SECTION: METRO; Pg. B01**LENGTH:** 603 words**HEADLINE:** School May Punish Girl Who Ate in Metro Station; Principal Says Student Broke Rule to Buy Fries**BYLINE:** Petula Dvorak, Washington Post Staff Writer**BODY:**

Handcuffed and arrested for eating French fries in a Metro station, 12-year-old Ansche Hedgepeth may now be kicked off her double-dutch jump-rope team or even suspended from school for her snacking infraction.

Administrators at Deal Junior High School set up a conference for next week to discuss those punitive options, said Ansche's mother, Tracey Hedgepeth.

"I couldn't believe they want to punish her even more," said the mother, who questioned how the school's jurisdiction over her daughter's behavior could extend to a Metro station hours after the school day ended.

Deal Principal Reginald Moss said he can't publicly discuss Ansche's case. But he said the school system's regulations stipulate that the administrators have jurisdiction over students when they ride on transportation provided by the school. Ansche, like many other students, uses a student fare card provided by the school.

Ansche was caught by one of a dozen undercover officers dispatched to the Tenleytown-AU Metro station as part of a week-long crackdown on illicit snacking. The seventh-grader had bought some French fries before riding an elevator into the station about 4 p.m. Oct. 23.

Metro police are unapologetic for the actions, pointing to their zero-tolerance policy. Yesterday, when Moss called Ansche into his office, he told her that the handcuffing may have been too harsh. Moss said he tells students that they must go straight home.

"He told me I should have gone straight home and not stopped to buy any food," Ansche said. "He said that's why he wanted to suspend me." But Ansche said she told Moss that she was hungry. She doesn't eat lunch because cafeteria food is "too gross."

"He said I should take some chips or a cupcake and put it in my book bag so I have a snack when I'm hungry. But that means I have to eat it before I go into the Metro."

Moss verified that an administrative conference has been scheduled but said there has been no determination on punishment.

The station in question draws students from Deal, Wilson High School, Georgetown Day and Sidwell Friends.

"It's a matter of supervision," Moss said of the school's vigilance over students away from campus. "You have about 3,000 kids at the Tenleytown station area every day."

At the beginning of the academic year, Moss said, every parent received an automated call reminding them of Metro's rules. Fliers are sent out throughout the year reiterating the policy.

The principal, who assigns school personnel to the area around the Metro station every day, said he could still use more help. "I think that had the rules been enforced and had Metro put enough people there—visible, uniformed people every day—we would not have had one child targeted and made an example out of in that way."

An article on the arrest appeared in yesterday's Washington Post and quickly became a topic of discussion.

Ansche was sought out by the ABC television show "Good Morning America," the BBC in London and a radio station in Australia. Hundreds of readers weighed in on the newspaper's Web site.

Many chastised Metro for overzealous enforcement, though some did complain that too many people were eating in the system. Others cheered Metro for the crackdown.

Some wondered whether Anshe was arrested because she is black.

Metro reported 25 arrests at the Tenleytown station this year. Of those arrested, five were white males, eight black males, eight white females and three black females. One was listed as a Hispanic female, who could be of any race.

Staff writer Justin Blum contributed to this report.

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