

Changes for the New Year

Daniel J. Plunkett

September has arrived again, and both students and faculty are primed for the start of another successful school year at Marblehead High School. Even in the first week of classes this is evident, as there has been a significant change to the school that has the potential to affect every student.

MHS has a new tardy policy. Last year, students were only issued a detention for an unexcused tardy. This year, however, the rule has been changed, increasing the penalty for being late without a note. As it now stands, if a student arrives late without a medical (or other excusable) reason for doing so, they are not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities after school that day in addition to the usual detention.

Principal Ken Weinstein, now in his second year at MHS, gave his reasoning for the change to the rule: "Last year's tardy numbers were much higher than we would have liked, so we needed a way to motivate kids to get here on time. It's very important to the teachers that students don't get to their classes late in the mornings, as it is disruptive to a good learning environment."

The idea was inspired by Danvers High School (a comparable school to MHS), which has been using the same rule for a couple of

years with fantastic results. In the first few school days, the change caused some minor pandemonium in the front office, but both students and staff quickly adjusted. Principal Weinstein said "there is marked improvement already. Almost 30% more kids than last year are getting to school on time in only the first week. Hopefully the trend will continue."

Another notable addition to MHS is the new option of virtual high school. There are currently eleven students enrolled, taking a total of thirteen courses. Though only utilized by a few students, virtual high school is very important to the school's administration. It gives kids the chance to work outside the bounds of school and pursue their passions. MHS can only offer a limited number of classes and is limited by the number of teachers and hours in the day. Virtual high school, however, allows students to explore whatever subject strikes a chord with them. The extra course options supplied by virtual high school provide many new opportunities for MHS students to delve into many intriguing subjects that Marblehead High School doesn't have.

Hopes are high, and the upcoming year should be one of the best yet.