



Attention! Ross Intermediate School students got a lesson in controversy when they were made to stand and salute teachers.

Picture: Warwick Smith

New school rules a shocker

A new school rule making students salute teachers had Ross Intermediate School parents up in arms yesterday – but that was the point.

Students arrived at school on Tuesday, to find posters telling them about the rule, which ordered them to stand and salute whenever a teacher entered.

If they didn't, they would find themselves in detention.

At first unsure, the students quickly realised the teachers meant business and stood to attention, Lizzie Boakes, 12, said yesterday.

"We just did it because we would get an instant detention."

To add to the new regime, the students' trip fund also got a deduction after three pieces of sports equipment were left out.

Any acts of vandalism or graffiti already led to a \$100 deduction, but the equipment incident was so bad,



By Katie Chapman

katie.chapman@msl.co.nz

it saw \$2000 taken off the fund.

The outrageous level of discipline quickly caused controversy among parents.

Many called the school, wanting to know what was happening, and a heated discussion started on Trade Me, with people comparing the salute rule to a military dictatorship.

Parents Andrew and Victoria Matheson started the discussion, and said they were appalled to hear their daughter was being made to salute.

"We do not live in a country like

that," Mrs Matheson said. Mr Matheson said it was hard to put your finger on why it was so wrong to make students salute.

"It's just not right, it's wrong."

People who responded to the Trade Me discussion agreed.

Many said it was all right for children to stand, but saluting was too far, and one person compared it to Nazi Germany.

Yesterday, principal Wayne Codyre was amused by the controversy, particularly because that was exactly what they were trying to create.

The "rules" had only been in place for the one day, and were designed to get the students thinking about political issues in China, as part of a project on the Olympics.

By suddenly acting like a dictatorship, the school could get the students thinking about issues of

authority and controversy, he said. The amount of reaction had helped make the point even stronger for the students, he said.

"It's actually worked exceptionally well... we wanted to create controversy."

"We had planned to do these kind of activities to get the kids thinking."

Mr and Mrs Matheson said it was fine if it was a teaching exercise, but questioned why parents weren't warned, or given a straight answer when they asked questions.

In response, Mr Codyre said it wouldn't have worked if parents had been pre-warned, because the point was to shock the students.

Yesterday afternoon, he posted a message on Trade Me explaining the situation, and assuring the \$2000 would be returned.

Reactions to the explanation were positive.