

Hello, everyone. Would you feel strange if a boy wore a skirt? I thought about something during the student council meeting at my school. It was that "SDGs are the theme of student council activities, but gender issues still exist in the school rules. I particularly felt this way about the personal appearance.

There have been some improvements for gender equality, but there is still room for more.

For example, the uniform options for girls are now skirts and slacks, but boys can wear only slacks. Also, girls can wear their hair short, but boys cannot wear their hair long. Some boys may want to wear skirts instead of slacks. I think it is wrong that school rules unreasonably restrict students based on gender. Will boys have trouble in school life just because they wear long hair and skirts? When I raise this issue, people often say, "Originality disrupts cooperation," or "It's always been like that." Why do they say so? It is because Japan has a culture that values conformity. Conformity means behaving in the same way as people around you. In Japan, there is a strong belief that one can get along in society by learning to be in tune with others. However, it sometimes forces a minority to conform to the majority. Speaking of school rules, boys are forced to conform to the so-called "normal" short hair, because "it's wrong for boys to have long hair". Under this value, the majority perspective is that "boys should have short hair and wear pants" continues to be accepted, and the gender-based school rules remain unchanged.

So, what can we do to resolve gender issues in school rules? I think the most important thing is to rethink "common sense". One day, my mother said to me, "The sex of the body and the sex of the mind can be different." Until then I had believed that all people were either male or female, so her words suddenly hit me. I realized that the entire range of sexuality should be considered normal. It turned out that some boys might want to wear a skirt, just as I wanted to wear a skirt. There would be many people like me who believe that "common sense" never just changes and accept it as is.

To improve this situation, as a student council member, I would like to find the unreasonable "common sense" in school rules and give all students a chance to rethink it. For instance, we can hold workshops and lectures on gender equality. Learning about different sexualities and discussing the issues of gender roles can change students' ideas of common sense. This could eventually lead to a review of school uniform and hairstyle regulations. We can listen to students who complain about gender inequality in uniforms and hairstyles, and exchange ideas with teachers to change the school rules. Through these efforts, I would like to change the school rules, which are regulated only for absurd reasons such as "because they're girls" or "because they're boys," and create a school where everyone can live their lives as they wish.

Thank you for listening.

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Gender Issues in School Rules