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## **Can my little brother's school forbid him to show his tattoos?**

Our family are Roma/Romani (not "Romanians" from Romania but Gypsies). My little brother (who is entering the 6th grade) has a large tattoo that spreads over the left side of his back, front, left arm down to the wrist and it spreads on to the left side of his face over his cheeks. Naturally, this isn't something where you can wear long sleeves and it covers it up. We've read the student dress code. There is not one mention of tattoos (the subject doesn't even come up) so technically, there's no guideline for what's appropriate and what isn't regarding tattoos. They also dislike the earrings (we all wear) and say that it's not appropriate (but the rulebook clearly states that any piercing on the face other than ear are forbidden but there's nothing stating how many ear piercings you can have or what type of earrings you can and can't wear). They also say his hair is unacceptable (it's waist length) but again THEIR rulebook says only "wild" hairstyles and unnatural hair colors are against the rules (his hair is just all one length, he doesn't even have a style). We all wear eyeliner (not heavy like you see a lot of people nowadays, literally, we just line our eyes) and they say that's inappropriate but they have no problem with the girls wearing makeup that is much much heavier and again, there are no rules regarding makeup or saying male students can't wear it. So they're saying every way he looks is inappropriate but it's all in accordance with THEIR rules. They said it was a satanic look (which is very offensive to us as Christians) and that other students may take offense to it. Can they tell my brother how to dress if he is following all the rules?

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## Additional Details

But there are not any rules regarding tattoos and it is not offensive writing or gang writing or anything like that. Also, it's ironic that they would make him wear makeup to cover the tattoo but then they say it's not right for boys to wear makeup regarding eyeliner.

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Spraz, it's our culture. We get tattoos very young until we're very old.

Football, why bother having a dress code if they're just going to make up their own rules on the spot for certain kids?

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Ouragon, I really want to curse you out right now. YOUR "norm" is not OUR "norm." And who are you to decide that your way is normal? Our family has been looking this way for over a thousand years. We've survived centuries of slavery and genocide by people like you who think we're freaks and we don't deserve the right even breathe your air. You're a bigot. The way you dress, it isn't normal to me probably but I'm not going to tell you how to live.

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Jenny, in our country, you can get tattoos at any age. There's no law. America's supposed to be a melting pot. We all come from somewhere different. Also, it's not like we can just wash it off nor would we. It's our belief system.

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It's a public school. Not a private school.

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Ouragon, I feel very equal to EVERYONE. The problem is that most don't feel we're equal. I don't feel persecuted, even though I have been (during an Anti-Romani rally, a man actually cut a

Romani tattoo off of my arm when I was 9). You're not an open person at all. Now, I pity you even more so. You're a pathetic excuse for a human being if you believe you can judge me or my family on our way of life. Three hundred years ago, Native Americans dressed very similar to us so maybe if the new Americans hadn't slaughtered them and ruined their cultures, our look would be more accepted in America.

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Ouragon, Do you know what's it like being a Gypsy in Europe? People are legally allowed to protest our existing in general. Do you know that if we actually are allowed to go to school, depending on our country, that they won't let us go to regular schools? The government segregates us or puts us in school for "mentally disabled" children. They think "Oh well. Be lucky you're getting anything." Countries can deny us citizenship, no matter where we're born. It's legal for people to discriminate against us. You can literally tell a Gypsy to their face "I'm not going to hire you because you're a Gypsy." and that's legal. There's no racial rights groups for us. We're have no right to be treated equally. We have no right to the basic human rights as set forth by the Geneva Conventions and nobody cares enough to fight for those rights. If we as Romani fight for them, we can easily get killed and guess what? Most police forces will not investigate murders of Romani people. Don't patronize me.

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Ouragon, in response to your email, You are insulting my people because our parents raised up in traditional culture. If you insult our ways, you insult every gypsy's ways. I don't need to fit in. You're the reason why I don't want to. Why would I want to be accepted by ignorant people? How have our parents done anything wrong? They love us, they support us and they help us. Also, your main idea is "fitting in." Why do I have to fit in with you? As long as I obey the law and cause no trouble, who I fit in with is no concern of yours. I do feel persecuted. I have been. I

was 9 years old when a man literally cut a Romani tattoo off of my arm at an anti-Romani rally. Don't ever accuse me of using my people's history to weave stories and gain sympathy. My grandparents were apart of the Holocaust as Gypsies. I'm not reciting history books. I know firsthand as well. Also, I don't have to justify anything to you. I haven't done anything to you.

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