

## School says Hello Kitty Christmas tree can stay

25th December, 2015



A maths teacher at a high school in Maine, USA has been allowed to keep her pink Hello Kitty Christmas tree in her classroom. The tree was made from pink plastic and was adorned with Hello Kitty ornaments. The teacher, Catherine Gordon, had earlier been ordered by the school principal Paul Butler to remove it after he decided it was an "inappropriate" Christmas

decoration. Mr Butler explained to ABC News that he initially believed the tree did not fit with the way the school celebrated the different religious events happening at this time of the year. He said: "A concern was shared with me regarding an inconsistency with our balanced approach to holiday observances."

Ms Gordon said: "I didn't think a pink Hello Kitty tree was offensive....It's a tree that's been up in my classroom for years." She posted her story on Facebook and it quickly went viral. She wrote: "The tree had no religious symbols on it whatsoever. No crosses or angels, just pink Hello Kitties and my students really enjoyed it." She added that society was becoming too worried about upsetting different people. She said: "I feel that this is definitely a turning point in our society when everything offends everyone all the time. It just sucks the joy out of everything." She told the local newspaper that: "It just seems that in our quest to be tolerant of everything, we've become intolerant to everything."

Sources: ABC News / BuzzFeed.com / fox4kc.com

## Writing

Christmas has lots its true meaning in today's society. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*maths teacher / Christmas tree / ornaments / school principal / believed / balanced / pink / offensive / religious symbols / worried / society / offends everyone / intolerant*

## True / False

- A school had an issue over a pink Christmas tree. T / F
- The principal of the school ordered a teacher to remove a Xmas tree. T / F
- The principal said the tree did not match its religious events policy. T / F
- The principal said the school needed a balanced approach to Xmas. T / F
- The teacher said she thought the tree might have been offensive. T / F
- The tree had small crosses and angels on it. T / F
- The teacher said society seems to be offended by everything. T / F
- The teacher said society was becoming more tolerant. T / F

## Synonym Match

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. adorned       | a. at first   |
| 2. ordered       | b. insulting  |
| 3. inappropriate | c. troubling  |
| 4. initially     | d. unsuitable |
| 5. concern       | e. at all     |
| 6. offensive     | f. decorated  |
| 7. whatsoever    | g. worry      |
| 8. upsetting     | h. accepting  |
| 9. joy           | i. instructed |
| 10. tolerant     | j. pleasure   |

## Discussion – Student A

- Are we becoming a society that is too worried about upsetting people?
- Why might some people find a pink Hello Kitty tree to be offensive?
- What do you think of Christmas?
- Why do we have Christmas trees at Christmas?
- Do rules suck the joy out of everything?
- Is society becoming more intolerant?
- How do you observe your major religious holidays?
- What questions would you like to ask Ms Gordon?

# BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

## Phrase Match

1. adorned with
  2. the school
  3. he initially believed the tree
  4. the school celebrated the different religious
  5. our balanced approach to
  6. it quickly went
  7. no religious symbols on it
  8. this is definitely a turning
  9. It just sucks the joy
  10. we've become intolerant
- a. point in our society
  - b. to everything
  - c. holiday observances
  - d. whatsoever
  - e. principal
  - f. out of everything
  - g. events
  - h. viral
  - i. did not fit
  - j. Hello Kitty ornaments

## Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Was the school principal right to have initially banned the tree?
- c) What do you think of Hello Kitty being tied in with Christmas?
- d) What do you think of Christmas trees?
- e) Why might the tree have been thought of as inappropriate?
- f) Should teachers be allowed to decorate their classrooms as they wish?
- g) What is a 'balanced approach' to holiday observances?
- h) What advice do you have for the school principal?

## Spelling

1. adorned with Hello Kitty rmsnntaoc
2. Christmas tcoieoradn
3. he ainiytlil believed the tree did not fit
4. A noeccnr was shared
5. our lbncaaed approach
6. holiday brnavsesoc
7. a pink Hello Kitty tree was fneesfovi
8. no ruigsiole symbols on it whatsoever
9. styocie was becoming too worried
10. ltdfneiiey a turning point
11. everything offdens everyone all the time
12. we've become nonertlait to everything

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. d	4. a	5. g
6. b	7. e	8. c	9. j	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – Hello Kitty

You think Hello Kitty is the best cartoon character. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their characters aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Mickey Mouse, Snoopy or Elsa from Frozen.

### Role B – Mickey Mouse

You think Mickey Mouse is the best cartoon character. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their characters aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Hello Kitty, Snoopy or Elsa from Frozen.

### Role C – Snoopy

You think Snoopy is the best cartoon character. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their characters aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Mickey Mouse, Hello Kitty or Elsa from Frozen.

### Role D – Elsa from Frozen

You think Elsa from Frozen is the best cartoon character. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their characters aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Mickey Mouse, Snoopy or Hello Kitty.

## Speaking – Cartoons

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Hello Kitty
- Mickey Mouse
- Superman
- Snoopy
- Elsa from Frozen
- Woody from Toy Story
- Shrek
- Wonder Woman

### Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.