Administration Explains Ban on Baked Goods

By Savannah Pees & Anna Schierenbeck
Survey Staff Writers

A recent policy banning baked goods has forced Brooklyn Tech students to say goodbye to their homemade treats. The ban, enacted shortly before Valentine’s Day, has left much of Tech’s community reeling, curious as to what the cause of this new policy could be.

The ban restricts students from bringing homemade baked goods to school, especially in large numbers. Sealed, store-bought baked goods, however, are allowed. It is unclear yet whether clubs and teams will be able to have homemade baked goods at their meetings during after school hours.

In the grace period between the announcement of the ban and the time when it was put into effect, the administration publicized the new rule in the morning announcements and by emailing parents. This way, come February 6th, teachers could immediately start penalizing students for bringing in homemade goods. Despite all the notifications students had of the ban, little information was given on the exact cause behind the change.

In a statement regarding the new policy, Principal Randy Asher, said, “Several incidents of students becoming ill following consumption of home baked goods led the Office of Health & Safety to recommend a ban of such goods. I implemented the new policy based on the recommendation to provide a more safe and secure environment for our students.”

According to Dean Jacqueline Manduley, the baking policy is a response to the negative impact on health that marijuana laced baked goods can have. Drugs are not an uncommon problem in high schools, but after seeing two students go to the hospital after consuming the tainted goods, the administration stepped in.

While this is not a widespread issue among Tech’s students, it is a serious one. Jennifer Sullivan, the Assistant Principal of Organization says, “Unfortunately a few kids spoil it for everyone. Maybe they think it’s funny, but we don’t want to be held responsible for a kid in the hospital.”

Brooklyn Tech is not unique in its policies regarding baked goods. According to the New York Times, in October 2009, the Department of Education implemented a policy banning the sale of baked treats for fundraising purposes in an effort to reduce childhood obesity among New York City’s students. In addition, many elementary schools have placed restrictions on homemade goods due to allergies.

Despite the health concerns behind the banning of homemade goods, many students aren’t convinced it was the best thing to do.

“The whole student body shouldn’t be held liable for what a couple of students do,” said Fariya Methila ’14.

Unfortunately a few kids spoil it for everyone. Maybe they think it’s funny, but we don’t want to be held responsible for a kid in the hospital. “

While the reaction from students has been strong, Tech’s community has been careful to abide by the new policy. According to Sullivan, only a few students have been caught with these prohibited homemade goods since the ban’s implementation. When caught, the baked goods will be confiscated. Multiple offenses will result in a call home.

However, there is some breathing room in this seemingly airtight rule. “This isn’t about your mom baking you a cookie for lunch,” says Sullivan. “It’s more about the big trays of brownies students are bringing in to sell.”

In fact, this policy is expected to last through the school year. “After a year or so, if there are no incidents, the ban may eventually be lifted. It isn’t very likely though, because the ban was put in place to protect the health of Brooklyn Tech’s students,” says Dean Manduley.

Sullivan, however, believes the policy may eventually be extended to all of New York City’s public schools. She expects the Department of Education will follow, as “They’re very reactive in their policies, and they will respond to this issue soon too,” she says.