

Assigned Seating in the Cafeteria?

Should Lakeside Middle School have assigned seats at lunch? Lila thinks it's a great idea. Josh disagrees. Who makes the best case? **You decide!**



YES

Assigned seats will make our cafeteria a better place.

Dear Principal Rodriguez,

Thank you for giving the students of Lakeside Middle School the chance to voice our opinions about the issue of assigned seating in the cafeteria. It is nice to know that you care what we think.

What do I think? I think assigned seating in the cafeteria is a FANTASTIC idea.

Think about the kids who don't have a group of friends to sit with every day. For them, walking into the cafeteria is about as fun as walking into the Hunger Games arena. Trying to find someone to sit with can create so much anxiety that some kids don't even bother. Instead, they sit alone or go to the library or an empty classroom. One time I found a girl eating her ham sandwich in the bathroom. (Don't worry; I took her back to my table with me.) If we had assigned seats, no one would have to face such situations.

Assigned seats would also break up some of the cliques that have formed at our school. I always sit with the same people at lunch: my gymnastics friends. Many kids do this—the soccer kids sit with the soccer kids, the band kids with the band kids, and so on. I don't think there is anything wrong with that, but sitting with the same group every day does prevent you from meeting new people.

It can also make others feel **excluded**. Assigned seats would force us all to branch out.

Maybe we'd even make some new friends along the way!

Many of my classmates are not going to share my enthusiasm though. Most kids say that lunch is the one time during the day when they get to relax and have fun with their friends. And assigned seating could mean sitting next to someone you don't particularly like. But in the words of my Language Arts teacher, Ms. Walsh, that would be a learning opportunity. In life, we're not always going to be BFFs with everyone we meet, right?

Assigned seating would be a way for all of us at Lakeside to practice treating everyone with respect and kindness—even people we don't know well or aren't friends with.

Thank you for considering my opinion,

Lila Olander