

But local media have report-ed that the once-strict requirement is being relaxed at many schools.

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The Affiliated High School of South China Normal University, a top high school in Guangzhou, revised the rule this semester. Xiao Chaoyun, deputy headmaster, said the school management now just requires students to be neatly dressed and tie up their hair if they want to wear it long.

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The change "indicates that students' personality is respected", Xiao said.

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"Now every floor of the girl students' dormitories has been equipped with a hair dryer," she added.

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Zhang Yiri, an associate professor at Guangzhou City Polytechnic, said the rules that require all the students to have the same, short hairstyle are outdated. "Students are not servicemen, and they have the right to develop their personality and like to look smart while studying hard," Zhang said.

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In recent years, more schools have quietly relaxed their rules on girls' hair, only requiring female students to have a short haircut at the beginning of the semester, rather than year-round.

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Xiao explained that the previous strict requirement was made in consideration for students' health and safety.

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"Girl students with long hair could have an accident during laboratory work in their chemistry lessons. They might also easily catch a cold after swimming, as their long hair cannot be dried in a very short time," Xiao said.

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The new tolerance of long hair has been applauded by parents and their children.

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