

Protect a Friend's Theft?

You work part time as an assistant in a university computer lab. You are the only employee who works in the lab on Friday evening. Very few students work on their assignment on weekends. One Friday evening a friend of yours comes to the computer lab when nobody else is present. After chitchatting with you he takes a new stack of printing paper and puts it in his backpack and begins to walk out of the computer lab. You stop him and tell him he shouldn't take the paper. He says, "I am paying expensive school fees, so it is okay for me to take this." You tell him this is stealing and he says, "No, my tuition pays for this."

The next day you see your friend on campus and tell him that you are still bothered by the incident in the computer lab. He says, "Don't take it so seriously. I've done this several times before. In fact, everybody takes something from the school once in a while."

On the following Friday night your friend visits the computer lab again when nobody else is there. Once again, he grabs a new stack of computer paper before leaving. If you grab the paper from him, he will only tease you by stealing something else from the computer lab and he will not listen to you if you try to stop him. If you report the incident to your supervisor, your friend will get into trouble and as a result, your friendship will be ruined and he may be kicked out of school. Should you report him to your supervisor or let him get away with the theft? What would you do? Why?

If people say tell your supervisor:

1. What if your friend threatens to lie to your supervisor that you have stolen many things?
2. What if your friend may be expelled from the school and his family will be very upset at you?

If people say don't do anything, then ask:

1. What if your boss accuses you or your innocent colleague of stealing the paper?
2. What if tuition fees increase because of the thefts?