

## DRESS AND GROOMING

### Dress Code Philosophy

The Board of Trustees believes that appropriate dress and grooming contribute to a productive learning environment. The Board expects students to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to wear clothes that are suitable for the school activities in which they participate. Student dress choices should respect the District's intent to sustain a community that is inclusive of a diverse range of identities. The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). The school District is responsible for ensuring that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student, and that dress code enforcement does not reinforce or increase marginalization, shaming, or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion.

**1. Basic Principle:** Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times.

Clothes must be worn in a way such that genitals, buttocks, breasts, and stomach are fully covered with opaque fabric. All items listed in the "must wear" and "may wear" categories below must meet this basic principle.

**2. Students Must Wear\***, while following the basic principle of Section 1 above:

- A **Shirt** (with a minimum of a 1 inch wide strap and fabric in the front, back, and on the sides immediately under the armpits), **AND**
- **Pants/jeans or the equivalent** (for example, sweatpants, opaque leggings, or shorts), **OR**
- **A dress or skirt, AND**
- **Shoes** (as appropriate for the environment and activity).

*\*Courses that include attire as part of the curriculum (for example, professionalism, public speaking, and job readiness) may include assignment-specific dress, but should not focus on covering bodies in a particular way or promoting culturally-specific attire. Activity-specific attire requirements are permitted for extracurricular activities and PE.*

**3. Students May Wear**, as long as these items do not violate Section 1 above:

- Sun-protective clothing, such as hats and hoods or wear body or hair protection as necessary as long as face is not obstructed, is allowed outdoors during the school day. The student's face must be visible to staff, and headwear must not interfere with the line of sight of any student or staff (except as a religious observance or if directed to prevent the spread of infectious disease).
- Athletic attire, as necessary for athletic activities.

**DRESS AND GROOMING** (continued)**4. Students Cannot Wear:**

- Clothing or accessories displaying profanity (including a foreign or slang word or term or a phonetic spelling or mirror image of a word or term regardless of the source), pornography, and violent language or images.
- Clothing or accessories considered unsafe, dangerous or a health hazard.
- Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity).
- Hate speech, images, or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups.
- Any clothing that significantly and intentionally reveals visible undergarments.
- Swimsuits (except as required in class or athletic practice).
- Any item that obscures the face (except as a religious observance or if directed to prevent the spread of infectious disease).
- Strapless tops or halter-tops.

The California legislature has determined that gang apparel is hazardous to the health and safety of the school environment and therefore, the wearing of such apparel may be restricted.

**5. Dress Code Enforcement**

The Board desires to provide an orderly and caring learning environment in which students work diligently on their studies, share responsibility for maintaining a positive school climate, and take pride in their school and their achievements. District staff, per Board Policy 5140 *Positive School Climate*, shall encourage positive student conduct. Staff and students shall encourage attitudes and behaviors that promote mutual respect and harmonious relations. To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall be properly trained to enforce the dress code consistently using the requirements below. School administration and staff shall not have discretion to vary the requirements in ways that lead to discriminatory enforcement. Sites will follow progressive discipline as outlined in the discipline handbook.

- Student dress code enforcement should not result in unnecessary barriers to school attendance.
- Inconsistent and/or inequitable discipline should be minimized whenever possible.
- Students will be removed from spaces, hallways, or classrooms as a result of a dress code violation as outlined in Sections 1 and 4 above. Students in violation of Section 1 and/or 4 will be provided three options to dress more appropriately during the school day:
  - Students will be asked to turn their garment inside out (if feasible) or put on their own alternative clothing, if already available at school, to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day.
  - Students will be provided with temporary school clothing to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day.

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- If necessary, parents may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.
- No student should be singled out for dress code enforcement because of racial identity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, body size/type, cultural or religious identity.
- Students should not be required to display their body in front of others (students, parents, or staff) in school including but not limited to the below actions:
  - Kneeling or bending over to check attire fit;
  - Measuring straps or skirt length;
  - Asking students to account for their attire in the classroom or in hallways in front of others;
  - Calling out students in spaces, in hallways, or in classrooms about perceived dress code violations in front of others or,
  - Accusing students of “distracting” others students with their clothing.

These dress code guidelines shall apply to regular school days and summer school days, as well as any athletic events, performances, and graduation ceremonies.

Students who feel they have been subject to discriminatory enforcement of the dress code should contact a site administrator.

**School Uniforms**

The students and staff of the District have the right to be safe and secure at school. Many public schools are forced to focus on the threat of violence and the messages of violence contained in many aspects of our society, particularly those reflected in gang regalia that disrupts the learning environment. Instructing staff on the subtleties of identifying constantly changing gang regalia and gang affiliations takes an increasing amount of time away from student instruction.

The Board recognizes that there is ample evidence that school dress significantly influences pupil behavior. The adoption of a school wide policy regarding school uniforms is a reasonable way to provide some protection for students. Required school uniforms may protect students from being associated with any particular gang. Moreover, by requiring students to dress to conform to a specific wardrobe, staff members may not need to occupy as much of their time learning the subtleties of gang regalia and enforcing their ban.

There is also growing evidence that schools that have adopted school uniforms, experience a "coming

together feeling," greater school pride, and better school behavior. The resulting

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improvement in school climate helps students to positively identify with their school and creates a sense of belonging to a positive group.

The Board supports school site adoption of voluntary or mandatory requirements for school uniforms in order to promote a healthy, safe, and positive school environment.

If a school's plan to require uniforms is adopted, the Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures whereby parents/guardians may choose to have their children exempted from the school uniform policy. Students shall not be penalized academically, otherwise discriminated against or denied attendance to school if their parents/guardians so decide.

#### **Adoption of School Site Voluntary School Uniform Programs**

Schools may adopt voluntary school uniform programs upon a decision of the principal in consultation with parent leaders, school faculty, and student representatives.

If a school elects to institute a voluntary program of school uniforms, the specific wardrobe garments shall be determined by the principal, staff, with reasonable input from the students, and parents/guardians of the individual school. The standardized wardrobe shall include a selection of clothing appropriate for the students' age, expected weather conditions, and anticipated school activities. Students may choose from this selection on a day-to-day basis.

All school athletic or other cocurricular uniforms shall be considered part of the school uniform.

Each school shall communicate to parents/guardians specific information regarding the voluntary school uniform.

1. Types and colors of school wardrobe.
2. Requirements for jackets/outer garments.
3. Optional articles of attire.
4. Methods to recycle clothes within the school community.
5. Notice of clothes sales and lists of competitive prices from vendors of standardized wardrobe articles.

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The Elementary School Site Council (SSC) or school discipline committee of each elementary school shall be responsible for initiating the process of considering a mandatory school uniform program. If the SSC supports the development of a mandatory school uniform program, and if the principal agrees, a parent election to decide whether or not to adopt such a requirement shall be conducted by the SSC in cooperation with the school parent group.

It is the responsibility of the principal to adequately communicate information to parents related to the consideration of a school uniform requirement, including:

1. Reason for consideration of a school uniform requirement.
2. Projected implementation time lines.
3. Compliance measures to be employed.
4. Types of sample standardized wardrobes under consideration.
5. Estimated clothing costs.

The means by which all information related to school uniforms is communicated to parents shall be in the form of a letter from the principal. In addition to providing general information about school uniforms, this letter will invite parents to one or more parent forums on the subject. Communications to parents may be made and/or augmented by any of the following:

1. Mail, email, or text broadcasts.
2. School newsletters.
3. Parent or Parent-Teacher Association or group meetings and newsletters.
4. Television, radio, and/or newspaper announcement.
5. Posters displayed at school and in the community.
6. Information sheets in school registration packets.

The parent election to decide whether to adopt a mandatory school uniform program shall take place over a two-day period, one of which shall be a Saturday. Elections may also be held in conjunction with parent conference weeks. Polls shall be available on the school campus and/or the District Education Center, and/or made electronically on the internet and supervised by objective persons selected by the Superintendent or designee. Provisions for absentee and/or mail-in balloting may be

considered, subject to the submission of a plan to the Superintendent and the approval of the Superintendent or designee.

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Each family is afforded one vote per student enrolled in the school. The student's parents/guardians will be eligible to vote for each family.

Families of children who will matriculate out of the school considering the mandatory school uniform program will not be involved in the voting. Families of children not yet enrolled in the school will also not be involved in the voting.

Families representing 75% of the students in a school must vote in the parent election, and a 75% affirmative vote of votes cast must be achieved prior to implementing a mandatory elementary school uniform program.

### **Implementation of Elementary Mandatory School Uniform Programs**

An elementary mandatory uniform requirement for school uniforms shall not be implemented without at least six months' notice to parents.

Information regarding the specific school uniforms shall be communicated to parents consistent with this Board Policy's requirements for parent information on voluntary school uniform programs, and shall include procedures/standards for seeking financial assistance.

Each school shall designate a staff member or school volunteer to help families in need of assistance in complying with school uniform requirements.

Each school shall follow the California Eligibility Scale for Free Meals in determining families in need of financial assistance.

Each school will work with staff, parents, community and business partners to identify resources for assisting needy families with the requirements. General Fund monies will not be expended to purchase uniforms.

### **Compliance with Mandatory School Uniform Programs**

Students whose parents choose not to have them comply with mandatory school uniform requirements where the community has indicated 75% or greater approval of the program will have the opportunity to transfer their children to another school within the District where school uniform requirements have not been adopted. The District will not be obligated, but will use good faith efforts, to accommodate such transfer requests.

Each participating school shall communicate with parents so the rationale, expectations, and benefits of the requirement will be fully understood by students and parents.

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Each participating school shall develop compliance measures for implementing school uniform requirements, including incentives and positive reinforcement measures to encourage compliance with the school uniform requirements.

No student will be considered noncompliant with school uniform requirements when the student wears the uniform of a nationally recognized youth organization, such as the Boy Scouts or the Girl Scouts on regular meeting days, or wears the uniform of a school-sponsored team or recognized school sponsored group on days where such uniforms are appropriately worn.

If necessary, disciplinary action may be taken to encourage compliance with the school uniform requirements. However, each school should strive to achieve full compliance through use of incentives and positive reinforcement measures, and should resort to negative sanctions only after all positive measures fail to ensure compliance.

Prior to initiating any disciplinary action against a student not complying with school uniform requirements, a conference with the parents/guardians and a school administrator must be held to determine the reason for noncompliance and to solicit parental support and cooperation.

Disciplinary action shall be initiated only after other means to secure support and cooperation have failed. A "progressive discipline" approach is to be employed by school staff so as to encourage full and consistent compliance. In the event positive incentives and disciplinary actions fail to bring about compliance with the mandatory school uniform requirement, an involuntary transfer to another District school where such a requirement has not been adopted may be implemented.

**Evaluation of Mandatory Standardized School Attire Requirements**

Any school which adopts a mandatory school uniform requirement shall evaluate the program at the end of each school year for the first three years. Thereafter, the evaluation of the uniform program may be included in the school's regular review process.