

**Students****Dress and Grooming**

The Board of Education encourages students to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). The District is responsible for seeing 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 increase marginalization or suppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance or body type/size.

The administration is encouraged to establish any needed regulations consistent with this policy through cooperative planning with staff, students and parents.

(cf. 5132.1 - Uniforms: Dress & Grooming)

(cf. 5145.4 - Nondiscrimination)

(cf. [5145.5](#) - Sexual Harassment)

(cf. [5145.511](#) - Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program)

(cf. 5145.53 - Transgender and Non-Conforming Youth)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-221](#) Boards of education to prescribe rules

**Policy Adopted: March 1, 1995**

**Policy Revised: December 2, 1998**

**August 8, 2001**

**August 17, 2005**

**June 2, 2021**

BRISTOL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bristol, Connecticut

**Regulation****Students****Dress and Grooming**

Items that are specifically prohibited under this policy include but are not limited to the following:

1. Shoes, boots or sneakers which mark the floor or have wheels.
2. "See through" style and/or mesh style shirts or blouses, midriff tops, backless tops, halter-tops or tank tops.
3. Flip-flops or thong style sandals at the elementary level.
4. Underwear worn as outerwear, including sleepwear.
5. Jackets, coats or boots normally worn as outerwear.
6. Hats, caps bandannas or headgear except those worn to established religious customs.
7. Short shorts and cutoffs.
8. Face coverings
9. Sunglasses

10. Any article of clothing (including jackets, shorts, hats and bandannas), jewelry or other items which is identifiable as a known symbol of gang membership or affiliation.

At the secondary level (6 - 12) clothing which is worn in physical education shall not be worn in other classes or parts of the school nor shall clothing worn in regular classes be worn in physical education. Physical education teachers will specify the kind of clothing appropriate for their activity.

Approved coverings worn as part of a student's religious practice or belief shall not be prohibited under this policy. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit protective hairstyles. "Protective hairstyles" includes, but is not limited to, wigs, head-wraps and hairstyles such as individual braids, cornrows, locs, twists, Bantu knots, afros and afro puffs.

### **Appeal Process**

Students or parents may appeal student, faculty or administrative decisions, except suspension which are applied to them or their child by first discussing it with the person(s) who made the

decision. Any further appeal must be made in writing to the principal and the appeal must demonstrate:

### **Regulation**

This administrative regulation provides guidance to schools regarding the implementation of Student Dress and Grooming Policy [#5132](#).

### **Definitions**

1. **Attire:** Clothing, including outerwear, headwear, accessories such as wallets, backpacks, hats, scarves or jewelry, shoes, etc.
2. **Grooming:** Makeup, tattoos, and hair style.
3. **Dress Code:** A set of parameters determined by the District that describes standards for student attire and grooming.
4. **Disruption to the School Day:** The building administrator or designee has discretion to determine behavior or attire that constitutes a disruption.
  1. **Minimum Safe Attire:** Student attire and grooming must permit the student to participate in learning without posing a risk to the health or safety of themselves or any student or school personnel.
    - a. Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or the equivalent (dresses, leggings, yoga pants, shorts, sweatpants). Pajama bottoms are not permissible.
    - b. ALL clothing must cover undergarments.
    - c. Tops/Dresses:
      - Shirts and dresses must have fabric in the front, back and on the sides (under the arms).
      - Allowing for styles, the midriff may not be exposed above the belly button when the student is standing in a relaxed position.
      - No strapless/halter/tube tops.
      - Tank tops must cover undergarments
    - d. Fabric covering breasts, genitals, and buttocks must be opaque.
    - e. At the HS level, hats, other headwear and hoodies are permitted as follows: Hats and other headwear must allow the face and ears to be visible to staff and not interfere with the line of sight of any student or staff. Hoodies must allow the face and ears to be visible to school staff.
    - f. Shoes which are safe and appropriate for weather, course assignments, athletic and other conditions. Flip-flops, slides or thong style sandals at the elementary school or in spaces at any level that pose a safety issue (ie - science/tech labs, gym, etc.) are not permitted. Slippers are not allowed to be worn at any level.
    - g. Clothing must be safe for all scheduled classroom activities, including physical education, science labs, shops and other activities where unique hazards exist. Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear. Requirements will be communicated in course

syllabi provided by the teacher.

h. Ripped jeans are acceptable but not above the mid-thigh unless sliders/leggings are worn underneath. No undergarments should be visible through the jeans.

i. Sunglasses are not permitted

2. All District students are expected to comply with the requirements of regulations detailed below:

a. Clothing/grooming may not depict, advertise or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.

b. Clothing/grooming may not depict pornography, nudity or sexual acts.

c. Clothing/grooming may not use or depict hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation or any other protected classification.

d. Clothing/grooming, including gang identifiers, must not pose a threat to the health or safety of any other student or staff.

e. Enforcement must accommodate clothing worn by students as an expression of sincerely held religious beliefs (head scarves, for example) and worn by students with disabilities (protective helmets, for example).

f. Approved coverings worn as part of a student's religious practice or belief shall not be prohibited under this policy. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit protective hairstyles. "Protective hairstyles" includes, but is not limited to, wigs, head-wraps and hairstyles such as individual braids, cornrows, locs, twists, Bantu knots, afros and afro puffs.

3. **Parent Responsibility:** Board Policy #[5132](#) provides: "The responsibility for the dress and grooming of a student rests primarily with the student and his or her parents or guardians." Parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring student compliance with the school dress code.

4. **Student Responsibility:** All students at all schools are responsible for complying with the district dress code during school hours and school activities.

5. **Staff Responsibility:** To equitably enforce the District dress code, teachers, administrators and all school staff must be notified of the policy at the beginning of the school year with a refresher in early spring in regards to its purpose and spirit, and how to enforce it without shaming students or disproportionately impacting certain student groups. Staff should be guided by the dress code policy and follow the letter and spirit of the District dress code.

6. **Enforcement:** When a school staff member or school administrator discusses a dress or grooming violation with a student, it is recommended that another adult should be present and at least one of the two adults should be the same sex as the student. Unless there is an immediate concern, a student should not be spoken to about a dress code violation in front of other students.

Enforcement is to be consistent with a school's overall discipline plan. Violations should be treated as minor on the continuum of school rule violations. No student is to be disproportionately affected by dress code enforcement because of gender, race, body size or body maturity.

*With written approval from the Office of Superintendent, Dressing and Grooming Regulations can be temporarily suspended (pajama day, decorate a hat day, etc).*

## **Appeal Process**

Students or parents may appeal student, faculty or administrative decisions, except suspension which are applied to them or their child by first discussing it with the person(s) who made the decision. Any further appeal must be made in writing to the principal and the appeal must demonstrate:

1. A rule being unfairly applied or

2. A violation or misinterpretation of a policy or rule.

The principal will hear the appeal informally in a timely manner which he/she deems appropriate to the situation.

The principal's decision will be final unless the decision is appealed. Any appeal beyond the principal will be conducted at the Superintendent's level. The Superintendent's decision shall be final.

## **Training for School Administrators, Teachers & Students**

A dress code is most effective when school administrators and teachers are trained to understand and embrace the intent of the code, how to apply and enforce the code equitably, and how to talk about the dress code and the reasoning behind it. Therefore:

1. School administrators and teachers should be trained to understand the purpose/spirit of the code, the actual code, and how to enforce it with the least impact on student learning and self-confidence.
2. School administrators and teachers must enforce the District dress code consistently. School administration and staff do not have discretion to vary the requirements in ways that lead to discriminatory enforcement.
3. School staff must be trained and able to use student/body-positive language to explain the code and to address code violations.

**Regulation Adopted: March 1, 1995**

**Regulation revised: December 2, 1998**

**August 8, 2001**

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**October 3, 2021**

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