

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.

Restrictions on freedom of student dress may be applied whenever the mode of dress in question:

- 1. is unsafe either for the student or those around the student.
- 2. is disruptive to school operations and the education process in general.
- 3. is contrary to law.

No restrictions on freedom of dress and adornment will be imposed which

- 1. reflect discrimination as to civil rights.
- 2. enforce particular codes of morality or religious tenets.
- 3. attempt to dictate or adjudicate style or taste.
- 4. do not fall within the direct or implied powers of the Board of Education.

Any restriction to the way a student dresses must be necessary to support the District's over-all educational goals.

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:

Students

Dress and Grooming

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 scarves or jewelry, and shoes.
- 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.

Basic Dress Code

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 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).
 - b. Shirts and dresses must have fabric in the front and on the sides (under the arms).
 - c. Clothing must cover undergarments.
 - d. Fabric covering breasts, genitals and buttocks must be opaque.
 - e. Hats and other headwear must allow the face 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.

Alternate language: Hats are allowed to be worn on campus but not in school classrooms or in classrooms only at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

- f. Shoes which are safe and appropriate for weather, course assignments, athletic and other conditions.
- g. Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities, including physical education, science labs, shop and other activities where unique hazards exist. Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.

Note: A more permissive dress code could also allow the wearing of midriff baring shirts, pajamas, ripped jeans, as long as underwear is not exposed, and tank tops, including spaghetti straps, halter tops, and "tube" (strapless) tops.

2. **District Dress Code:** Board policy #[5132](#) provides: "Attire or grooming depicting or advocating violence, criminal activity, use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or hate speech are prohibited." All District students are expected to comply with the requirements of this policy. Specifically:

- a. Clothing may not depict, advertise or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.
- b. Clothing may not depict pornography, nudity or sexual acts.
- c. Clothing 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, 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).

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.

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 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 approved: