

DRESS CODE

A safe and disciplined learning environment is essential to a quality educational program. Appropriate student attire promotes school safety, improves discipline and generally enhances the learning environment. The Board finds that the dress-related requirements set forth in this rule are necessary for the safety and welfare of the student body and school personnel.

Students are expected to come to school with proper attention having been given to personal cleanliness, grooming and neatness of dress. Students whose personal attire or grooming distracts the attention of other students or teachers from their school work shall be required to make the necessary alterations to such attire or grooming before entering the classroom or be sent home by the principal to be properly prepared for school. Students who fail to meet the minimum acceptable standards of cleanliness and neatness as determined by the principal and as specified in this rule, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures, including suspension.

I. GENERAL REGULATIONS

- A. The school advisory council of each school shall adopt a dress code applicable to the students of that site. Minimally, the dress code shall require that a student's clothing, accessories, hairstyle and hygiene must not distract from nor disrupt the learning environment. Also, the dress code shall, at a minimum, prohibit the following types or articles of clothing: tube tops, tank tops, and halters, bare back or midriff clothing, skin tight clothing, see through clothing, bathing suits (except with permission for specified events). Shorts and dresses may not be shorter than the tips of the individual's fingers when standing upright with their arms at their sides. Undergarments shall not be exposed, i.e., boxer shorts, underwear. These samples are not all-inclusive but serve as a guide for individual schools. Individual schools may have a stricter dress code if approved by the school advisory council. All school dress codes must be reviewed and approved by the Superintendent and legal counsel before implementation. Dress codes shall be approved annually by the Board. Once a dress code has been approved, it need only be re-submitted if additional changes are made.
- B. The determination of what constitutes a safety or health hazard, a distraction of students from classroom activity, a disruption of

a school program or excessive maintenance of school property shall be made by the principal.

- C. Suspension of students within the purview of this dress code shall be made by the principal pursuant to current Florida Statutes and District policies and after observing the rights of due process of the student concerned.
- D. The time, the specific location, the type of activity going on, and whether the alleged offense is the first or repetitious on the part of a student must all be considered when determining the discipline for a student. The primary consideration is correction of a problem by the quickest and most reasonable method so that the instructional program for students may proceed with the least possible disruption.

II. **SCHOOL UNIFORMS**

- A. School uniform policies promote school safety, improve discipline and enhance the learning environment, by helping prevent gang colors and insignia at school, instilling students with discipline, helping parents and students resist peer pressure, helping students concentrate on school work, and helping school officials recognize intruders.
- B. Schools shall be eligible to participate in a mandatory uniform pilot program if the following conditions are met:
 - 1. **Parent/Legal Guardian Vote**
 - a. Upon request made to a school's principal by the School Advisory Council, a parent/legal guardian vote on the proposition to implement a mandatory uniform program at the school shall be scheduled to occur not less than fourteen (14) and not more than thirty (30) calendar days after the request is received.
 - b. Not less than seven (7) days before the vote, the Superintendent shall publish one time in a newspaper of general circulation in the county the location and time of the vote.
 - c. Only parents or legal guardians of students who are

currently enrolled at the school, and who will be at the school the following year, and who have been identified through the student registration records shall be eligible to vote; provided, however, that there shall be allowed only one (1) vote per family. If the records show that a family has exceeded their single vote, their votes shall be reduced to one (1) vote if they have voted the same way. Otherwise, all of the family's votes shall be invalidated.

- d. The proposition shall pass if a majority of eligible voters vote in favor of the proposition.

2. Uniform Selection

- a. At the time of submitting its request for a parent/legal guardian vote in accordance with Section 2(B)(1) of this rule, the School Advisory Council shall recommend a uniform that complies with all other provisions of this rule concerning appropriate attire.
- b. Final uniform selection shall be subject to approval by the Board.

3. Program Implementation

The mandatory uniform policy at the school shall be implemented commencing with the semester immediately following the vote.

4. Financial Considerations

- a. Financial Hardship

No student shall be denied attendance at school or be otherwise penalized for failing to wear clothing that complies with the uniform dress code if such failure is due to financial hardship.

b. Assistance

Each school's principal and School Advisory Council shall develop procedures and criteria to offer assistance to students who would have or are having difficulty complying with the school's uniform dress code due to financial hardship; and shall develop a program to provide for donations of clothing or financial assistance, or reuse of uniform clothing or similar program that would alleviate such financial hardship.

c. New Students

Students entering the District during the school year shall be granted a two (2) week grace period before being required to comply with the uniform dress code.

III. **EXEMPTIONS**

Exemptions to the mandatory uniform program may be granted when:

- A. Uniforms of a nationally recognized youth organization such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or JROTC are worn on regular meeting days.
- C. The wearing of a school uniform violates a student's sincerely held religious belief.

IV. **EXEMPTION PROCEDURES**

Requests for exemptions shall be made in accordance with the following procedure:

- A. A request is made by mail or in person by the parent or guardian for an Application for Exemption from the Uniform Program ("Application"). The parent or guardian may obtain an Application at the student's school site.
- B. The Application is completed in full and submitted to the school principal. The Application must clearly specify the basis for the requested exemption by reference to section 3 (A) through (C)

above, and must contain a detailed justification for the requested

exemption.

- C. The school principal or other designated administrator meets with the parent to discuss the uniform policy and the nature of the objections to the policy. The purposes of this meeting include: (1) ensuring that the parent or guardian understand the reason for, and goals of, the uniform policy; (2) verifying the accuracy of the information on the Application; (3) preventing fraud or misrepresentation.
- D. The decision whether or not to grant the exemption rests within the sound discretion of the school principal.

V. **PROGRAM COMPLIANCE**

The school, having duly instituted a mandatory uniform program, must implement the program by:

- A. Each school shall develop incentives and positive reinforcement measures to encourage full compliance with the uniform policy. Each school should strive to achieve full compliance through use of incentives and positive reinforcement measures, and should resort to disciplinary action only when positive measures fail to ensure compliance. In addition, schools shall communicate with parents so that expectations, rationale, and benefits are fully understood by the student and his or her family.
- B. If necessary, disciplinary action may be taken to encourage compliance with the policy.
- C. A “progressive discipline” approach is to be employed so as to encourage full and consistent compliance with the least amount of disciplinary action.
- D. Prior to initiating any disciplinary action against a student not complying with the policy, a school administrator or counselor shall request a conference with the parent or guardian to solicit cooperation and support.

VI. **TERMINATION OF MANDATORY UNIFORM PILOT PROGRAM**

The mandatory uniform program at a school may be terminated in accordance with either of the following:

- A. By Board vote; or
- B. Upon the school advisory council's request, and a majority vote of eligible families, pursuant to the procedures identified section 2(B)(1) of this rule.

F.S. 1001.41, 1001.43, 1006.07

Effective Date: 07/01/05

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