

Policy Code: 4316 Student Dress Code

Students are expected to adhere to standards of dress and appearance. Our guiding principles for the student dress code are similar to those experienced and expected in the workplace: attire that furthers health and safety of students and staff, enables the educational process, and facilitates the operations of the school. Parents are asked to partner with the school district to monitor student attire to help adhere to the guiding principles set forth in the policy.

To promote these goals, students may not wear or carry clothing, jewelry, book bags, or other personal articles that:

1. Depict profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, or violence;
2. Promote the use or abuse of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs;
3. Are prohibited under Policy 4309 III-2 (Gang and Gang Related Activity) or any other provision of the Code of Student Conduct;
4. Threaten the health or safety of staff or students; or
5. Are reasonably likely to create a substantial disruption of the educational process or operations of the school.

Specifically:

- a) Students must wear clothing that covers their skin from chest to mid-thigh with opaque (non-see-through) fabric in front, back, and on the sides.
- b) Students must wear shoes at all times except when changing for physical education or athletic practices or events or when specifically directed otherwise by a teacher or administrator.
- c) Clothing must cover undergarments (waistbands and straps excluded).
- d) Breasts, genitals and buttocks must be covered with opaque (non-see-through) fabric.
- e) Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, wood shop, and other activities where unique hazards exist.
- f) Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.
- g) Head coverings (including hats, hoods, sweat bands, and bandanas) are generally prohibited in the school building. However, students may wear head

coverings in the school building as an expression of sincerely held religious belief (e.g., hijabs or yarmulkes) or cultural expression (e.g., geles or other hair ties or headwraps) or to reasonably accommodate medical or disability-related issues (e.g., protective helmets).

h) Students are free to adopt hairstyles of their choice, whether short, long, shaved, braided, curled, twisted, knotted, or otherwise. In particular, schools must permit protective, natural, or cultural hairstyles, including but not limited to such hairstyles as braids, dreadlocks, locs, twists, tight curls or cornrows, Bantu knots, afros, geles, and other culturally expressive hair ties or headwraps. Schools may impose restrictions on student hairstyles only when strictly necessary to comply with specific health or safety regulations in light of unique hazards in a particular context (e.g., physical education classes, science labs, wood shop, or similar activities) or when otherwise required by law or Board policy. In the rare cases when such restrictions may be appropriate, they must be applied consistently without regard to race, ethnicity, or other protected status. Differential treatment of student hairstyles because of the hairstyles' historical association with a particular race, ethnicity, or other protected status is strictly prohibited as discriminatory under Board Policy 1710.

Enforcement: Any school dress code enforcement actions should minimize the potential loss of educational time. When a school staff member or school administrator discusses a dress or grooming violation with a student, the adult should be the same gender as the student if practicable. Staff concerns about student attire should be discussed **discreetly** and out of earshot of other students to the extent practicable. Teachers or staff discussing a dress or grooming violation with a student should present options for obtaining appropriate clothing (e.g., school clothing closet) or otherwise complying with this dress code (e.g., removing a problematic item). School-directed changes to a student's attire or grooming should be the least restrictive and disruptive to the student's school day.

Applicability: This policy is to be applied fairly and consistently without regard to race, gender, or other inherent traits or characteristics. Principals or their designees shall make reasonable accommodations for religious, educational, medical, or disability-related reasons and for cultural celebrations.

This policy does not apply to school-sanctioned uniforms and costumes approved for athletics, choral, band, dance, or dramatic performances. Except as specifically noted in this policy based on an exception or accommodation, this policy applies at all times when students are present on school property or in attendance at official, school-sponsored events.

Adopted: May 7, 2019

Wake County Board of Education