

Wicomico County Board of Education

DRESS CODE POLICY

(Revised and Approved 3/9/10)

(Effective 2010-11 School Year)

Schools have three primary responsibilities with respect to students. The first responsibility is to foster academic achievement. The second responsibility is to create and maintain a school environment that is safe, orderly, and conducive to learning. The third responsibility is to promote and support positive community standards and values such as civility, respect for others, self-respect, citizenship and other constructive character traits and behaviors. Without these, teaching and learning will be negatively impacted.

Students have the responsibility to choose their attire, arrange their personal appearance, and maintain their personal hygiene in a manner that is safe, healthy, non-offensive, and conducive to the educational process. The student dress code is intended to create a positive school climate of respect for self and others, reduce the occurrence of discipline problems, and maintain safety and order in the school so that effective teaching and learning can take place.

School staff members have the responsibility to report violations of the Dress Code Policy and respectfully address students who are out of compliance with the policy. Administrators have the responsibility to investigate these reports, encourage students to make better choices in attire, and assign appropriate consequences for infractions. It is also the responsibility of the administrators and the staff to maintain an awareness of attire related to gang affiliation so that the Dress Code Policy can be implemented effectively. A teacher or staff member is expected only to report violations and is never expected to measure or touch a student they feel is in violation of the Dress Code Policy. Specific units of measure for widths and lengths are provided to ensure that the policy is measurable and to alleviate misinterpretations of the policy.

This policy shall apply to all students during the regular school day and at such other times as designated by the principal. This policy shall apply in all school buildings and on all school grounds, on all school buses and other school vehicles, and at all school-related, or Wicomico County Board of Education sponsored activities, including, but not limited to school field trips and school-sponsored events.

Principals may grant exceptions to the dress code for disabilities or sincerely held religious beliefs if such accommodations are reasonable and do not pose a hardship for the school. Principals may also grant exceptions for specific, school-sponsored events or situations. This policy includes Physical Education class attire. Guidelines for sports and extra-curricular uniforms worn during the school day are at the discretion of the principal.

Decisions concerning any dress code issues which are addressed or inferred in this policy are ultimately at the discretion of the building principal.

HEAD COVERINGS

Head coverings **may not be worn** in the school buildings. Prohibited head coverings include:

- Hats
- Head coverings of any kind, including bandanas, visors or hoods
- Sunglasses
- Curlers, picks or combs
- Anything deemed gang related

Head bands should be no wider than one and one-half (1 ½) inches. Hair should be neat and well-groomed. Principals may grant exceptions to the dress code for head coverings for sincerely held religious beliefs or for medical conditions.

TOPS

Tops should:

- Cover the entire back and shoulders (including tank-style tops; razorback style tops are inappropriate)
- Cover the midriff and back when sitting or standing
- Be of sufficient thickness so that undergarments cannot be seen
- Fit modestly so that cleavage is covered (as measured by a horizontal line across the top of the arm pit)
- Cover undergarments completely (including bra straps, muscle shirts, beaters, and camisoles)
- Fit so they are not tight to the skin or overly baggy

BOTTOMS

All bottoms should:

- Cover undergarments at all times
- Be of safe length (cannot drag on floor)
- Be worn no lower than the natural waistline
- Remain at natural waistline without assistance other than a belt or suspenders (measured by child placing hands on hips)
- Not resemble what is considered bedroom attire
- Fit so they are not tight to the skin or overly baggy (leggings and tights are not appropriate bottoms)

Skirts, dresses, and jumpers should:

- Be no shorter than 3" above the top of the knee while standing (width of a 3" X 5" index card)
- Be no shorter than 3" above the top of the knee even when worn with leggings or tights

Skorts and shorts should:

- Be no shorter than 5" above the top of the knee while standing (length of a 3" X 5" index card)
- Be no shorter than 5" above the top of the knee even when worn with leggings or tights

OUTERWEAR

Outerwear (jackets and coats made specifically for outdoor use) should:

- Be removed upon entering the building and stored appropriately
- Note: Principals may alter this requirement as necessary for the specific conditions within the school

FOOTWEAR

Footwear should:

- Be worn at all times
- Fit secure enough to the foot for safe movement
- Not resemble what is considered a bedroom slipper
- Have a hard or rubber sole
- Not have such a high heel as to cause concern for safe movement throughout the school
- Be appropriate to the student's educational program (i.e. steel-toed shoes for construction classes, tennis shoes for Physical Education classes)
- Elementary students:
 - May not wear flip flops to school
 - Must wear shoes closed in the back or have a back strap on footwear such as sandals or clog-style shoes

JEWELRY, PIERCINGS, PERFUMES AND ACCESSORIES

Jewelry, piercings, perfumes and accessories should:

- Be modest without attracting undue attention to the wearer
- Be unobtrusive so as not to endanger others' ability to be comfortable and healthy
- Not have an overwhelming fragrance so as to infringe on others' comfort and health
- Have no parts that may be perceived as a weapon (i.e. spikes)
- Have no chains, large belt buckles or adornments that could cause, or be perceived to cause, injury or damage
- Include only those scarves which are intended for indoor use

APPEARANCE, LANGUAGE ON CLOTHING, SYMBOLS, TATTOOS AND MESSAGES

Student appearance, language on clothing, symbols, tattoos and messages must not show, reference or infer:

- Profanity
- Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, firearms, or weapons
- Violence or abuse
- Suggestive and/or sexual messages
- Language, brand logos or symbols as or on attire that offend, demean, or promote hatred toward an identifiable person or group based on a person's race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, or disability

- Words, symbols, or placement of writing on clothing deemed inappropriate for the school setting such as rude, disrespectful, or discourteous expressions that would have an effect on the learning environment
- Anything deemed gang-related

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION OF THE DRESS CODE POLICY¹

- First Offense:
 - Student conference with administrator to discuss the violation(s) and review the dress code policy
 - Parent contact by the administrator to discuss the violation of the policy and subsequent consequences should more violations occur
 - Change of clothing by student to rectify violation (provided by the student or parent)
 - Student will be placed in ISS until appropriate clothing is secured
- Second Offense:
 - Student conference with administrator to discuss the violation(s) and review the dress code policy
 - Parent contact by the administrator to discuss the violation of the policy and subsequent consequences should more violations occur
 - Change of clothing by student to rectify violation (provided by the student or parent)
 - Student discipline disposition at the discretion of the administrator
 - Student will be placed in ISS until appropriate clothing is secured
- Third and Additional Offenses:
 - Student conference with administrator to discuss the violation(s) and review the dress code policy
 - Parent contact by the administrator to discuss the violation of the policy and subsequent consequences should more violations occur
 - Change of clothing by student to rectify violation (provided by the student or parent)
 - Student assignment to in-school or out-of-school suspension day(s) (at the discretion of the administrator while utilizing progressive discipline²)
 - Student will be placed in ISS until appropriate clothing is secured

¹Administrators should refer to Code of Conduct when assigning consequences for violation of the Dress Code Policy

²Progressive Discipline – an approach that promotes positive student behavior and enables the administrator to choose consequences in an increasing manner from least to most severe