

I. Policy Statement

The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and nurturing educational environment conducive to student learning. At the same time, the Board recognizes the right of students to express themselves through their choice of personal attire. While student dress and appearance are the responsibility of students and their parents, the Board believes that dress and appearance should not interfere with any aspect of the educational process and expects that dress and appearance are consistent with all Board policy.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline acceptable standards for student dress during the school day and during other school-related activities and to outline disciplinary actions taken in response to violations of these standards.

III. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Attire – Articles or aspects of personal appearance including, but not limited to, clothing, footwear, jewelry, bookbags, body art, tattoos, or sunglasses.
- B. Gang – A group of three or more individuals who engage in a pattern of destructive or delinquent activity for the benefit of the group's members and/or furthering the reputation of the group or individual. A gang shares a common identity, and members view themselves as members of a cohesive group. The common gang identity may be one or more of the following:
 - 1. The gang has a name that separates the group from others.
 - 2. Members share common symbols such as clothing, graffiti, and hand signs.
 - 3. Members regularly come together as a group and may claim a specific geographic location inside or outside of the school.
- C. Headcovering – Any article worn on the head including, but not limited to, hats, sunglasses, bandanas, hoods, or visors.
- D. Health – A state of positive physical, mental, and social well being.

- E. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:
 - 1. Biological parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
 - 2. Adoptive parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
 - 3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and privileges.
 - 4. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student, but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian.
 - 5. Foster parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a State agency or a licensed child placement as provided by Family Law Article 5-507.

- F. Religion – A recognized system of belief or worship encompassing the nature of a deity and/or reality and the relationship of human beings to that deity and/or reality.

- G. Religious Obligation – Traditional and customary practice required of adherents to a religion.

- H. Safety – The condition of being protected against physical and/or emotional harm.

- I. School-Related Activity – Any school system activity, on or off school property, in which a student directly participates (e.g., school field trip, athletic event, or class/graduation activity) or an activity in which the student does not directly participate but represents the school or student body by being present (e.g., spectator at a school event).

IV. Standards

- A. Students will wear attire that contributes to a safe school environment conducive to learning.

- B. Students will not wear attire that is disruptive to the school environment, that promotes illegal or harmful activities, or that could endanger the health or safety of that student or others during school hours and school-related activities. Prohibited attire includes, but is not limited to, that which:
 - 1. Depicts profanity, obscenity, the use of weapons, or violence.
 - 2. Promotes use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or other illegal or harmful products.
 - 3. Promotes, implies or contains sexually suggestive messages.

4. Unduly exposes or reveals skin or undergarments.
 5. Depicts gang affiliation.
 6. Contains language or symbols that demean an identifiable person or group or otherwise infringes on the rights of others.
 7. Causes or is likely to cause a material disruption, a substantial disorder to school activities or the orderly operation of the school, or an invasion of the rights of others.
 8. Contains rude, disrespectful, or discourteous expressions inconsistent with civil discourse and behavior.
 9. May damage school property.
- C. Headcoverings will not be worn in the school building or during indoor school-related activities. However, headcoverings required for medical reasons or religious obligations may be worn.
- D. If a parent or student believes that the student, for religious obligations or medical reasons, must wear attire prohibited by this policy, the parent or student will consult with the principal. The principal may consult with the Administrative Director or legal counsel in rendering a final decision.

V. Compliance

- A. The Superintendent/Designee is responsible for implementation of this policy and for ensuring that students and parents are provided annual notice of these provisions.
- B. The principal/designee is responsible for implementation of this policy and for ensuring that students, staff, and parents are provided annual notice of these provisions.

VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop appropriate procedures to implement this policy.

VII. References

- A. Legal
Family Law Article 5-507
- B. Other Board Policies
Policy 1040 Safe School Environments
Policy 1060 Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation
Policy 3000 Religious Observances

Policy 9020 Students' Rights and Responsibilities
Policy 9200 Discipline
Policy 9290 Gangs, Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Delinquent Group
Behavior

- C. Other
Student Code of Conduct

ADOPTED: June 1, 1971
AMENDED: January 25, 1990
September 9, 1999
March 10, 2011
EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2011

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- I.** The principal is directed to inform all students, parents, and staff members of the Student Dress Code Policy at the beginning of each school year and whenever appropriate. Principals may at any time advise students of the requirements of the dress code policy. Communication methods may include, but are not limited to:
- A. Making announcements via the public address system
 - B. Publishing the information in school newsletters
 - C. Publishing the information in agenda books, student handbooks, etc.
 - D. Posting the information on a bulletin board, email, or electronic news
 - E. Making the information available for new students through the registration process.
- II.** If any staff member suspects that a student is in violation of this Student Dress Code Policy, that staff member will refer the student to an administrator who will promptly conduct an investigation to determine if a violation has occurred.
- III.** If it is determined that a violation has occurred, the administrator may take the following disciplinary action:
- A. Permit the student to remain in the activity, provided the student removes/changes the prohibited item. The replacement item may be delivered by the parent, may be gym attire, or may be other items available at the school site (e.g., donated clothing, etc.). Upon compliance, the student may return to normal activities.
 - B. In the event that the student refuses to remove/change the prohibited item, the administrator will follow disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of Policy 9200 Discipline and the Code of Conduct.
 - C. In the event that a student's violation of this Student Dress Code policy simultaneously violates any other Board policy, the administrator will follow disciplinary procedures of both policies.

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