

Book	Policy Manual
Section	POLICIES FOR BOARD APPROVAL - VOL. 37, NO. 2 - APRIL 2025
Title	Copy of DRESS AND GROOMING
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5511 - DRESS AND GROOMING APPEARANCE

The School Board recognizes that each student's mode of dress and grooming appearance is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference. The Board will not interfere with the right of students and their parents to make decisions regarding their appearance, except when their choices interfere with the educational process of the School Corporation.

Accordingly, the Superintendent shall establish such grooming dress and appearance guidelines as are necessary to promote discipline, maintain order, secure the safety of students, and provide a healthy environment conducive to academic purposes. Such guidelines shall prohibit student dress or grooming appearance practices which:

- A. present a hazard to the health or safety of the student or to others in the school;
- B. interfere with school work, create disorder, or disrupt the educational program;
- C. cause excessive wear or damage to Corporation property;
- D. prevent the student from achieving his/her own educational objectives because of blocked vision or restricted movement.

Such guidelines may establish the dress requirements for members of the athletic teams, bands, and other school groups when representing the Corporation at a public event.

Such guidelines shall also apply to the dress requirements for members of the athletic teams, bands, and other school groups when representing the Corporation at a public event. Where appropriate, a uniform or specific dress requirement shall be used for students when representing the Corporation as described.

In enforcing the dress code, the following procedures shall be used:

- A. the Principal shall serve as the final arbiter of student dress and appearance within the building or at school-sponsored events or activities;
- B. before taking action to enforce dress code requirements, including by requiring that a student remove, cover, or otherwise conceal the item or depiction at issue, the Principal shall determine whether the item constitutes protected speech insofar as the item independently makes a statement of a discernable nature to the observer by depiction, words, or combination of the two (2) that does not require separate explanation.

~~The Superintendent shall develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy which:~~

- ~~A. designate the principal as the arbiter of student dress and grooming in his/her building;~~
- ~~B. invite the participation of staff, parents, and students in the preparation of a dress code which may specify prescribed dress and grooming practices, but may not amplify the rationale of prohibition established by Board policy;~~
- ~~C. instruct staff members to demonstrate, by example and precept, personal neatness, cleanliness, propriety, modesty, and good sense in attire and appearance;~~

- D. ensure that all administrative guidelines impose reasonable and necessary restrictions on the exercise of the student's taste and individuality.

Students who violate the foregoing rules will not be admitted to class and may be suspended from school.

Expressive dress may not be protected speech if it involves:

- A. obscenity;
- B. language or depictions intended to incite violence or foment hatred of others.

Dress that is protected speech still may be prohibited if it is likely to cause a substantial disruption to the educational environment. This may include dress that includes the use of vulgarity, discriminatory language including racial or ethnic slurs, negative stereotypes, violence, or other communication when the clear intent is to invoke strong reactions in observers so as to impair the ability of teachers and/or students to engage in educational pursuits.

No protected speech may be prohibited on the basis of disagreement by Corporation officials with the specific point of view expressed if the topic is otherwise permitted (e.g., permitting depictions of support for one political party but prohibited depictions of support for the other).

If the clothing cannot be removed or concealed, the student may be sent home after contact is made with the student's parent.

The established dress code shall be upheld in a nondiscriminatory and uniform manner.

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