

Shelby County Board of Education

6021

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STUDENT DRESS CODE

I. PURPOSE

To outline the requirements for student dress for Shelby County Schools.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all schools and students in Shelby County Schools.

III. DEFINITIONS

Standardized Dress/Uniforms – Clothing of the same specified colors and styles.

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

The standards for Shelby County Schools dress reflect “common sense” and a concern for each child's comfort, safety, cleanliness, and sense of modesty. There is a strong relationship between neat, appropriate attire and a positive learning environment.

Apparel or appearance which tends to draw attention to an individual rather than to a learning situation must be avoided. To that end, Shelby County Schools establishes a basic dress code to ensure appropriate and modest dress.

~~2013-2014 School Year~~

~~To minimize disruption during the merger transition period, to effectuate fairness and consistency, and to maintain safety, discipline and academic focus, all schools in Shelby County shall remain in their existing method of dress for the 2013-2014 school year. Schools requiring standardized dress/uniforms shall continue to do so and~~

~~schools only requiring compliance with the District wide dress code shall continue to do so through the end of the 2013-2014 school year.~~

~~Schools wishing to change their method of dress by adopting or discontinuing standardized dress/uniforms may initiate this process beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, in accordance with the administrative rules and regulations accompanying this policy. Any approved changes to a school's method of dress will take effect beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.~~

2014-2015 School Year and Beyond School-based Dress Code

Schools wishing to change their method of dress by adopting or discontinuing standardized dress/uniforms may do so in accordance with the process outlined in the administrative rules and regulations accompanying this policy. To change its method of dress a school must request and receive approval from the Superintendent (or designee) in accordance with the process outlined in the administrative rules and regulations accompanying this policy. Any approved changes to a school's method of dress become effective for the following school year and shall remain in effect for a minimum of four (4) school years.

At its discretion, the District may at any time implement standardized dress/uniforms at a school based on safety concerns (e.g., gang activity) or other justifiable reasons.

Exemption from certain dress code requirements or standardized dress/uniforms may be requested by a parent for his/her child for medical or religious reasons.

V. RESPONSIBILITY

A. The Superintendent (or designee) is responsible for implementing this policy.

Legal References:

1. TCA 49-6-4215
2. TCA 49-1-302 (j)
3. TCA Title 49-6-4009

Cross References:

1. 6030 Gangs and Non-School Related Social Clubs

Administrative Rules and Regulations

STUDENT DRESS CODE

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DRESS CODE

- Pants must be worn at the waist, be appropriately sized, and of a safe length.
- Head apparel (such as hoods, hat, etc.) must not be worn inside the school building, except for religious or medical reasons (see *Individual Exemptions from Certain Dress Code Requirements or from Standardized Dress/Uniforms*).
- Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for indoor or outdoor physical activity.
- Clothing or accessories may not display offensive, vulgar language or images, nor promote inappropriate and/or illegal products such as alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.
- For students in Grades 3-5, “short shorts”, mini-skirts, and skin-tight outer material such as spandex are inappropriate attire. No shorts or skirts shorter than four (4) inches above the knee are allowed.
- Shirts, blouses, and dresses must completely cover the abdomen, back, and shoulders. Shirts or tops must be no longer than wrist-length and must cover the waistband of pants, shorts, or skirts with no midriff visible.
- Waist-length and appropriately sized sweaters, sweatshirts, and lightweight jackets can be worn inside school for warmth.

The school administration reserves the right to determine whether a student's attire and appearance are within the limits of decency, modesty, and safety. In matters of opinion, the judgment of the Principal/designee shall prevail.

The Principal may allow exceptions for school-wide programs or special classroom activities.

The school administration will administer appropriate consequences for policy infractions.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL DRESS CODE

- Pants must be worn at the waist, be appropriately sized, and of a safe length.
- Shirts, blouses, and dresses must have sleeves and must completely cover the abdomen, back, shoulders. Shirts or tops must cover the waistband of pants, shorts, or skirts with no midriff visible. Low-cut blouses, shirts, or tops or

extremely tight tops, tube tops, or any top that exposes cleavage are prohibited. Shirts, blouses, and tops must be no longer than wrist-length.

- Head apparel (such as hoods, hats, etc.) must not be worn inside the school building, except for religious or medical reasons (see *Individual Exemptions from Certain Dress Code Requirements or from Standardized Dress/Uniforms*).
- Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for indoor and outdoor physical activity.
- Clothing and accessories such as backpacks, patches, jewelry, and notebooks may not display (1) racial or ethnic slurs/symbols; (2) gang affiliations; (3) vulgar, subversive, or sexually suggestive language or images; nor promote inappropriate and/or illegal products such as alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.
- Skirts, dresses, and shorts must be no shorter than four (4) inches above the knee.
- Waist-length and appropriately sized sweaters, sweatshirts, and lightweight jackets can be worn inside school for warmth.
- Prohibited items include: (1) large, long and/or heavy chains; (2) studded or chained accessories; (3) sunglasses, except for health purposes; (4) sleepwear, pajamas, and/or blankets; (5) skin-tight outer materials such as spandex; (6) facial jewelry (including tongue piercing).

The school administration reserves the right to determine whether the student's attire is within the limits of decency, modesty, and safety.

The Principal may allow exceptions in special circumstances, or for occasions such as holidays and special performances. The Principal may further prescribe dress in certain classes such as physical education, vocational education, and science labs.

Any student not attired in accordance with the policy shall be directed to correct the violation or spend the remainder of the day in in-school suspension (ISS). Repeat offenders shall be subject to additional measures which include parent conferences, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspensions as described in the District-wide discipline policy.

SCHOOL STANDARDIZED DRESS/UNIFORMS

For school year 2013-2014, Unless a different form of standardized dress/uniform has been approved for a school prior to and/or in accordance with this policy, the following Basic Standardized Dress/Uniform is applicable to Shelby County Schools currently wearing standardized dress/uniforms. former Memphis City Schools.

Basic Standardized Dress/Uniform

- The basic standardized dress/uniform shall be tan, navy blue or black pants, skirt or jumper and a white long sleeve or short sleeve shirt with a collar (polo style, dress style, or turtleneck). A student can wear any combination of the official colors.
- Pants must be straight-legged or boot cut. Full-length pants, cropped pants, cargo pants and straight-legged capri pants are permitted. Denim jeans, pedal pushers, and bell bottoms are not permitted.
- Walking shorts are permitted for elementary, middle/junior high and high school students. (Walking shorts are straight-legged shorts that are at the knee.)
- Pants must fit at the waist and not be oversized or undersized (e.g., baggy pants, sagging pants, tights, or pants made of spandex are prohibited.). If belts are worn they must be fitted and put through belt loops.
- Skirts or jumpers must be at or below the knee.
- Shirts must be tucked on the inside unless they are made to be worn over pants or skirts.
- T-shirts may be worn as undergarments. They must be solid white or one of the additional colors approved by the school leadership council.
- Light jackets, vests, shirts, sweaters, sweat shirts, and cardigans are permitted as items that may be worn over the uniform top. They must be white, tan, navy blue, black or one of the additional colors approved by the school leadership council.
- No denim material may be worn as standardized dress/uniform clothing.
- All standardized dress/uniform clothing must be plain, without any visible manufacturer's logos, brand names, pictures, or insignias.
- Shoes may not have heels higher than one and one-half (1.5) inches. Shoes with rollers/wheels are prohibited. Athletic shoes, sandals with straps on the heel, and boots are permitted.
- Heavy coats, heavy jackets, and raincoats are not covered by these regulations and are not to be worn during the school day unless permitted by the Principal for special circumstances.

The principal may approve additional styles and colors for the uniform top if the change is school-related and is consistent with district-wide standards for appropriate dress. The Principal may also approve of days or events when school uniforms will not be required and may allow exceptions in special circumstances, or for occasions such as holidays and special performances. The Principal may further prescribe dress in certain classes such as physical education, vocational education, and science labs.

PROCEDURES FOR MODIFYING SCHOOL METHOD OF DRESS

A. Requests to Wear the District-wide Dress Code

1. Based upon a principal's recommendation or a petition of 20% of parents at a school to modify the school's method of dress, the principal of the school shall form a Dress Code Committee of parents, teachers, administrators and students (where the age is appropriate) to serve during the school year.
2. The Dress Code Committee will assist in the development of a parental communication plan which outlines the process, timeline, and methods of communicating with parents associated with modifying a school's method of dress.
3. The principal will send a copy of the proposal to each family with a copy of the voting dates and parameters. The principal will provide:
 - a. An official family roster, which will consist of current families who will have student(s) currently enrolled in the school and will have a child or children in the school when the dress code is implemented
 - b. The principal, with the agreement of Dress Code Committee, will designate a member(s) of the school staff to serve as Voting Official(s) to assist in validation and security of the voting process.
 - c. The Voting Official(s) will be responsible for:
 - i. Securing the official voting roster and the locked voting box
 - ii. Verifying the vote by insuring that each family has one vote
 - iii. The Voting Official(s) will initial the roster indicating that identification has been reviewed and the ballot placed in the box
4. Voting shall be:
 - a. Located in a central area in the school office
 - b. Available during specified hours that provide all parents time to vote
 - c. Held during 10 school days designated in the Parent Communication Plan
 - d. Designated as one vote per family
5. The family voter must:
 - a. Be a parent/guardian of the student(s) currently enrolled in the school
 - b. Have a child or children in the school when the dress code is implemented
 - c. Show identification and sign the official voting roster
6. At the end of the 10th day of voting, a representative of the Superintendent's staff will meet with the principal and members of the Dress Code Committee to open the voting box and tally the ballots. This meeting will be

- held in a central location at the school in public view. In accordance with these procedures, a clear majority (51% or more of families voting in the school with a child or children currently enrolled who will be enrolled in the school during the year of implementation) must be in favor of modifying of the school's method of dress before the school may implement the changes requested in the proposal. The results of the voting will be communicated to all parents, and provided on the school website.
7. A copy of the approved plan signed and dated by the principal of the school will be filed with the Superintendent (or designee).
 8. Implementation of the approved proposal to modify the method of dress at the school will begin on the first day of school in the following school year.

B. Requests to Wear Standardized Dress/Uniforms

1. Based upon a principal's recommendation or a petition of 20% of parents at a school to modify the school's method of dress, the principal of the school shall form a Dress Code Committee of parents, teachers, administrators and students (where the age is appropriate) to serve during the school year.
2. The Dress Code Committee will assist in the development of the proposed standardized dress/uniforms for the school and a parental communication plan outlining the process, timeline, and methods of communicating with parents associated with modifying a school's method of dress.
3. The dress proposal and the parental communication plan shall be submitted to the Superintendent (or designee) for approval to ensure consistency with the district-wide dress code.
4. After the Superintendent (or designee) has approved the proposal and plan, the Principal and the Dress Code Committee shall:
 - a. Present the standardized dress/uniform proposal to the parents (at a publicized and designated time)
 - b. Advise parents of the method(s) available for submitting opinions or suggestions regarding the proposed standardized dress/uniform
 - c. Communicate to parents the dates, location, and process of voting
5. The Dress Code Committee will review all parent suggestions and comments and determine if changes are to be made to the dress code. If changes are made, the Principal will resubmit the proposal to the Superintendent (or designee) for review and re-approval.
6. After the proposal has been approved, the school shall comply with numbers three (3) through eight (8) under section *Requests to Wear the District-wide Dress Code* above.

INDIVIDUAL EXEMPTIONS FROM STANDARDIZED DRESS/UNIFORMS

To obtain an exemption from certain dress code requirements or from standardized dress/uniforms on religious or medical grounds, a parent must obtain a copy of this policy, a Request for Exemption form and an Exemption Questionnaire from the school, complete the form and questionnaire, and return them to the school. A religious exemption from standardized dress/uniforms can be based on the religion of the parent or the religion of the child, but the parent must apply for the exemption in either case.

The Principal shall review the form and questionnaire and grant or deny the request for exemption. If the Principal is considering denying the request, he or she must first send a letter to the parent requesting a meeting to discuss and clarify the reason for the exemption request. The parent must meet with the Principal within three (3) school days of receiving the letter. The Principal must grant or deny the request within two (2) school days of meeting with the parent. If the Principal denies the request, he or she must give the parent a written basis for the decision.

The parent can appeal a Principal's denial of the exemption to the Superintendent (or designee) within two (2) days of receiving the Principal's denial. The Superintendent (or designee) must meet with the parents within five (5) school days of receipt of the request for appeal, and must render a decision within five (5) school days of meeting with the parents. If the Superintendent (or designee) also denies the appeal, he or she must provide a written basis for the decision.

The parent may make a final appeal to the Shelby County Board of Education and ask the Board to review the written record of the request for exemption and the denials. This appeal must be made within five (5) school days of the Superintendent's (or designee's) denial of the appeal. The Board may hold a hearing on the exemption request at its discretion. The decision of the Board of Commissioners is final. A student will remain in school in the dress style recommended by the parent until the appeal is final.