

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
INFORMATIONAL REPORT**

RECOMMENDATION ON

REVISED BOARD POLICY 02-0036-000 DRESS CODE

June 24, 2024

Background Information:

The Board maintains a manual which sets forth the various policies of the Harford County Public Schools. The manual contains policies which are either required by federal and state law and regulation or which are, in the Board's judgment, necessary and appropriate for the school system to operate in a lawful, appropriate and effective manner.

Discussion:

The Board Policy entitled 02-0036-000 Dress Code was last affirmed on March 21, 2005.

The Board of Education requested the administration to propose a revised Dress Code policy. Based on extensive work of the HCPS Equity Committee, the proposed policy revision is similar to language previously updated in the student handbook. The Equity Committee conducted stakeholder engagement to draft the language, including central and school-based staff and students. As the policy language echoes the work of the Equity Committee and the student handbook, the schools are familiar with the intent and requirements.

The proposed, revised policy was presented to the Board Policy Review Committee on June 12, 2024, and is moving forward to the Board of Education as presented at the committee.

Attachments:

1. Proposed, revised policy entitled 02-0036-000 Dress Code
2. Current 02-0036-000 Dress Code policy

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent recommends that the Board review for possible approval at a future meeting, the proposed, revised policy entitled 02-0036-000 Dress Code.

POLICY TITLE: Dress Code		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: 5/20/2002	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED: 6/9/2003	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED: 3/21/2005
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY: Students		

Students have the responsibility to choose their attire and to arrange their personal appearance in a manner that is safe, healthy, inoffensive, and not disruptive to the educational process. The student dress code is intended to create and preserve a positive climate for teaching and learning, reduce the possibility of discipline problems, and preserve school order and safety. The Superintendent of Schools is directed to develop regulations and procedures to implement this policy. The school administration shall have the authority to make all decisions required to enforce this policy.

School Uniforms

The Board of Education supports the voluntary use of uniforms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, pending approval by the school principal and adherence to the guidelines established by the Superintendent of Schools.

Annual Review

This policy along with its administrative procedures will be reviewed by the Board of Education annually.

Board Approval Acknowledged By:

Patricia L. Skebeck

Patricia L. Skebeck, Secretary and Treasurer
Board of Education of Harford County

Policy Action Dates					
ACTION	DATE	ACTION	DATE	ACTION	DATE
Adopted	5/20/2002				
Amended	6/9/2003				
Reaffirmed	4/26/2004				
Reaffirmed	3/21/2005				

Responsibility for Policy Maintenance & References		
LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER NAME: Unknown		JOB POSITION OF LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER: Unknown
PERSON RESPONSIBLE:		JOB POSITION OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE:
DESIGNEE NAME: N/A		JOB POSITION OF DESIGNEE: N/A
REFERENCE 1 TYPE: Legal	REFERENCE 1 NO. 13A.08.01.11	REFERENCE 1 DESCRIPTION: COMAR
REFERENCE 2 TYPE: Legal	REFERENCE 2 NO. Section 7-306	REFERENCE 2 DESCRIPTION: Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article
REFERENCE 3 TYPE:	REFERENCE 3 NO.	REFERENCE 3 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 4 TYPE:	REFERENCE 4 NO.	REFERENCE 4 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 5 TYPE:	REFERENCE 5 NO.	REFERENCE 5 DESCRIPTION:
POLICY NUMBER PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 1, 2005: Students .07.01.135		

POLICY TITLE: Dress Code		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: 5/20/2002	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED: 6/9/2003	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED: 3/21/2005
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY: Students		

I. Purpose:

Students have the responsibility to choose their attire and to arrange their personal appearance in a manner that is safe, healthy, inoffensive, and not disruptive to the educational process. The student dress code is intended to create and preserve a positive climate for teaching and learning, reduce the possibility of discipline problems, and preserve school order and safety. ~~The Superintendent of Schools is directed to develop regulations and procedures to implement this policy. The school administration shall have the authority to make all decisions required to enforce this policy.~~

The intention of the policy is to seek compliance from students and to avoid disciplinary action unless there are repeated offenses or serious aggravating circumstances.

School Uniforms

~~The Board of Education supports the voluntary use of uniforms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, pending approval by the school principal and adherence to the guidelines established by the Superintendent of Schools.~~

Annual Review

~~This policy along with its administrative procedures will be reviewed by the Board of Education annually.~~

II. Statement of Policy

- A. **Students' style of dress or grooming must meet the reasonable requirements of a course or activity.**
- B. **Clothing must cover the chest, midriff (navel or belly button), pelvic/groin area and buttocks down to the upper thigh with opaque material.**
- C. **Students must wear:**
 - i. **Shirt**
 - ii. **Bottom (e.g., pants, sweatpants, shorts, skirt, dress, and leggings)**
 - iii. **Shoes must be worn at all times and should be safe for the school environment. Bedroom shoes or slippers shall not be worn, except for school activities approved by the principal.**

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- iv. Curricular and activity specific shoes may be required.
 - v. All tops must have shoulder straps.
 - vi. See through garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath that meets the requirements of this dress code
- D. Students are prohibited from wearing clothing, jewelry, tattoos, bookbags or other articles of personal appearance that:
- i. Depict profanity, obscenity or violence.
 - ii. Promote the use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol or other illegal or harmful products.
 - iii. Contain sexually suggestive messages.
 - iv. Unduly expose or reveal skin or undergarments
 - v. Contain language or symbols that offend or demean an identifiable person or group or otherwise infringe on the rights of others in violation of the Board harassment or discrimination policies.
 - vi. Cause, or is likely to cause, a substantial or material disruption to school activities or the orderly operation of the school, including, but not limited to symbols of hate, both current and historic, hate groups, and gang-related attire.
 - vii. Contain profane, disrespectful or discourteous expression which is lewd or inconsistent with civil discourse and behavior.
 - viii. Endanger health and safety.
- E. Outer garments, including, but not limited to, lightweight jackets, hats, etc. are not to be worn during the school day. These items are to be stored in lockers.
- i. Principals shall have the discretion to permit students to wear outerwear/headwear in the school building when conditions are warranted.
 - ii. Headwear that interferes with identification of a student for safety and security purposes, denotes membership in a gang or hate group, identified in partnership with law enforcement, and/or disrupts the orderly operation of school is prohibited.
- F. Accessories
- i. Jewelry/body piercings (example: spiked jewelry, chokers, rings, bracelets) that pose a health or safety hazard or is disruptive to the orderly process of the school is not permitted. Chains that could cause injury to others are not permitted.
 - ii. Sunglasses – Sunglasses are considered inappropriate for inside wear. Medical exceptions may be considered by the principal.

- G. Physical Education
 - i. Proper physical education apparel and shoes are to be worn. For secondary students, the appropriate school physical education uniform should be worn.
 - ii. No jewelry, with the exception of stud earrings, medical bracelets, and fitness trackers, may be worn during physical activity. Jewelry which needs to be removed for physical education class shall be the responsibility of the student.

- H. Exceptions under this policy shall be given consideration in the following instances:
 - i. When a reasonable accommodation is made if a student wears an article of dress or other item which is a lawful exercise of his/her right to freedom of expression or freedom of religion.
 - ii. When a reasonable accommodation is necessary due to a documented medical or health reason, but only as authorized by the school principal.
 - iii. When an authorized activity, such as athletics or band, requires different attire, but only upon the direction of the coach or faculty sponsor of the activity.

- I. Principals will have the authority to suspend or waive the restrictions on clothing for social events such as, but not limited to, proms, homecoming dances or school sponsored activities aimed at promoting school spirit. When a student's attire or personal appearance violates this policy, the principal or designee shall investigate and take appropriate actions.

Board Approval Acknowledged By:

~~Patricia L. Skebeck~~ Sean W. Bulson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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