

EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE

New Hanover County School System employees serve as role models for the students and as representatives of the New Hanover County Schools. Consistent with these roles, all employees shall dress professionally and appropriately relative to their specific job duties and responsibilities.

Administrators and administrative support employees are expected to project a professional image and shall adhere to standards of dress and appearance appropriate for an office/business environment.

Teachers and teacher support personnel are expected to project a professional image that sets positive dress and grooming examples for students and shall adhere to standards of dress and appearance that are compatible with an effective learning environment.

Presenting a bodily appearance or wearing clothing, tattoos or other appliances which are disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive, obscene, or which endangers the health or safety of the students or others is prohibited.

School-based personnel shall follow this Policy on all days students are in attendance. Principals may designate one (1) day per month when reasonable modifications to this Policy may be made. Principals may also determine the appropriate dress to be worn on workdays when students are not in attendance. All other personnel shall follow this Policy on all workdays unless directed differently by their supervisor.

Physical education teachers and coaches shall wear the appropriate athletic attire necessary to meet the requirements of their job responsibilities and a sweat or warm-up suit when not actively teaching physical education classes or coaching.

Appropriate dress is also expected of cafeteria, maintenance, and transportation personnel and may include the wearing of uniforms or other apparel approved by their principal or supervisor. Vocational teachers must wear OSHA approved clothing when teaching Career and Technical Education classes.

An employee's dress or appearance may not be so unusual, inappropriate or lacking in cleanliness that it disrupts classroom or learning activities or the workplace environment. Examples of appearance or attire that are prohibited for school system employees include but are not limited to:

- Visible tattoos on the neck, head or face;
- Jewelry affixed to an employee's nose, tongue, cheek, lip or eyebrow;
- Clothing or lack of clothing that is disruptive, provocative, revealing, indecent, vulgar, or obscene;
- Revealing necklines, bare midriffs and excessively tight clothing;
- Clothing which promotes alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or the use of controlled substances by words or symbols;
- Clothing which contains profanity, nudity, depicts violence, or is sexual in nature by words or symbols;

- Sandals with flip flop style strap or bedroom shoes/slippers;
- Tank tops or spaghetti strap tops;
- Undergarments worn as an outer garment or any see-through clothing that reveals an undergarment;
- Hats, visors, sunglasses, sweatbands, and bandanas (may be worn outside but must be removed when inside the workplace);
- T-shirts or athletic wear (may be worn by Physical Education teachers and coaches when teaching/coaching);
- Shorts (may be worn by Physical Education teachers/coaches when working and must be no shorter than four (4) inches above the middle of the knee);
- **Denim jeans;**
- Leggings, “skinny jeans” or other excessively tight fitting pants unless covered by a top or dress no shorter than four (4) inches above the middle of the knee;
- Dresses, skirts, skorts and similar garments that are shorter than four (4) inches above the middle of the knee;
- Ear gauges (only permitted for employees who already have them and are employed by the Board as of May 26th, 2015, and in such case, they must be no larger than the size of a nickel and filled with a plug that is the tone of the person’s skin); and
- Any item of clothing or jewelry that creates a disruption of the school environment/learning activities or workplace environment, or that poses a threat to the safety and well-being of students or staff.

Supervisors and school-level administrators are authorized to interpret and enforce this Policy and shall review it with their staff at the beginning of each school year. Reasonable accommodations shall be made as approved in writing by the appropriate supervisor for those employees who, because of a sincerely held religious belief, cultural heritage, or medical reason, request a waiver of a particular part of this Policy for dress or appearance.

In compliance with federal laws, New Hanover County Schools administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Adopted: 05/07/07

Revised: 07/12/11, 07/07/15