

# Employee Dress and Appearance Policy

## Professional Dress

In July of 2015, the New Hanover County Board of Education revised Policy 6435 which establishes a code of professional dress for all employees effective the beginning of the 2015/16 school year. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all employees dress professionally and appropriately relative to their specific job duties and responsibilities and that an employee's dress does not disrupt classroom or learning activities.

Further, the policy states that all teachers and teacher support personnel are expected to project a professional image that sets positive dress and grooming examples for students and will adhere to standards of dress and appearance that are compatible with an effective learning environment.

While defining professional dress can be a challenging and subjective matter, the policy prohibits an employee from presenting an unprofessional appearance or wearing clothing which is disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive, obscene, or which endangers the health or safety of the students or others.

The policy requires supervisors and school administrators to interpret and enforce these rules. Any employee in violation of this policy will be asked by his or her supervisor or principal to obtain appropriate clothing or take steps to meet the requirements of the policy. Repeated problems with an employee's inappropriate dress or appearance may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Reasonable accommodations shall be made for those employees who, because of a sincerely held religious belief, cultural heritage, or medical reason, request in writing a waiver of a particular part of this policy for dress or appearance.

School based personnel shall follow this policy on all days students are in attendance. The principal may designate one day per month when reasonable modifications to this policy may be made. The principal will determine the appropriate dress to be worn on designated days or on work days students are not in attendance. All other personnel shall follow the policy on all work days unless directed differently by their supervisor.

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



### ***Examples of attire considered inappropriate for school employees include but are not limited to:***

1. Jewelry affixed to an employee's nose, tongue, cheek, lip or eyebrow
2. Clothing or lack of clothing that is provocative, revealing, indecent, vulgar, or obscene
3. Low necklines, bare midriffs and excessively tight clothing
4. Clothing which promotes alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or the use of controlled substances by words or symbols
5. Clothing which contains profanity, nudity, depicts violence, or is sexual in nature by words or symbols
6. Sandals with flip flop style strap (Flip Flops®/Jellies®/Rainbows®) or bedroom shoes/slippers
7. Tank tops or spaghetti strap tops
8. Undergarments worn as an outer garment or any see-through clothing that reveals an undergarment
9. Hats, visors, sunglasses, sweatbands, and bandannas (may be worn outside but must be removed when inside the workplace)
10. T-shirts or athletic wear
11. Denim jeans, leggings as pants
12. Shorts
13. Ear gauges
14. Any item of clothing or jewelry that creates a disruption of the school environment/learning activities, or that poses a threat to the safety and well-being of students or staff
15. Visible tattoos on neck, head or face

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

May I wear denim jeans on any student day other than the principal's monthly designated "dress down" or "spirit day" or denim that is a color other than blue?

*No, the policy is very specific that employees are not to wear denim including denim in colors other than blue or blue jeans, designer denim pants or dress denim pants. The policy does allow employees to wear denim skirts or dresses as long as they are professional in nature.*

May I wear leather sandals?

*Yes, employees may wear leather sandals with a strap which crosses over the foot and a defined heel. The supervisor or principal will have final say in whether or not a specific sandal is appropriate for professional wear.*

May I wear a "polo shirt" or collared shirt on any student day other than the principal's monthly designated "dress down" or "spirit day"?

*Yes, collared shirts that are short sleeve or long sleeve such as "golf shirts", "polo shirts", and short sleeve button up shirts either with or without a school logo, are considered professional dress.*

May I wear mid calf capri or cropped pants instead of full length pants?

*Yes, capri or cropped pants are acceptable. Form fitting spandex, leggings worn as pants, shorts (of any type) or pants that rise above the knee when seated are not acceptable.*

How short, low-cut, tight or unbuttoned does a skirt, blouse, shirt or other apparel have to be before it is considered unprofessional?

*If the supervisor or principal decides an employee's skirt, blouse, shirt or other apparel is disruptive or*

*inappropriate for the work or learning environment, the employee will be asked to change into appropriate clothing.*

Is a tongue ring acceptable?

*No jewelry of any type affixed or pierced though the nose, tongue, cheek, lip, or eyebrow is acceptable. Earrings are acceptable, however, they should not be distracting or place the wearer in danger of harm.*

Why do we have a dress code?

*We believe that by emphasizing a professional demeanor and modeling high standards of personal conduct within our schools, we create an effective and positive learning environment*



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