

Students

Dress Code Policy

I. Statement of Policy

All students should have the right to dress comfortably and express themselves in school through a selection of clothing, hairstyles, jewelry, and accessories that represent and affirm their identities. Student dress codes should support equitable educational access and should not reinforce gender or cultural stereotypes or reinforce marginalization or oppression of any group. The administration may establish additional guidelines prohibiting other specific articles of clothing, accessories or the like.

Importance to School:

- a. Creating a greater sense of self and identity
- b. Fostering a safe and inclusive school environment

Importance to Student:

- a. Having a positive impact on a student's self esteem by promoting choice and individuality.

Importance to Parent:

- a. Reducing parental cost of school clothing
- b. Offering time and energy savings for parents

II. Accommodations

Where the bona fide religious beliefs or health needs of a student conflict with the Dress Code Policy, the schools will provide reasonable accommodation. Any student, parent, or guardian desiring an accommodation shall notify the school principal in writing of the requested accommodation and the factual basis for the request.

Coverings worn as part of a student's bona fide religious practices or beliefs shall not be prohibited under this policy.

It is the policy of the New London Board of Education that no student will be denied an education due to bona fide financial inability to obtain clothing that complies with the Dress Code Policy. Any student, parent or guardian for whom compliance with the Dress Code Policy poses a bona fide financial burden may request clothing assistance from school administration and/or support staff.

School principals and/or support staff shall try to connect parents and guardians with available community resources to locate adequate clothing.

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Dress Code and Uniform Policy

II. Accommodations (cont.)

No restrictions on dress and adornment will be imposed which:

- 1) reflect discrimination as to civil rights,
- 2) interfere with any free speech/first amendment rights that the student may have,
- 3) attempt to dictate or adjudicate style or taste.

Nevertheless, clothing containing promotion of or reference to drugs, alcohol or tobacco, acts of violence, and offensive or obscene symbols or words is prohibited. Moreover, clothing should also be free of slogans, names, titles, or symbols which are defamatory toward persons, groups, the school, or other organizations or which are likely to distract or disrupt the educational process.

III. Parent/Guardian Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parents and/or guardians to ensure that their children's dress conforms to the requirements of this policy.

IV. Staff Responsibility

School personnel, including substitutes, will work with the administration, families and students to ensure compliance with the Dress Code Policy. Also, as stated in Policy #4118.23- Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified –Staff Conduct; school personnel including substitutes should serve as role models for proper attire in the educational setting.

V. Administrative Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Administration to inform all parents and guardians of the Dress Code Policy. This information shall be available in English and Spanish, and other languages upon request. It shall also be available in the Student Handbook, on the New London Public Schools' website and in such other places as the administration deems suitable to reach all parents and guardians.

If the Superintendent or Board of Education deem it necessary to update the Dress Code Policy, it will be brought to the Board of Education by January 1 of the previous school year, and parents/guardians will be notified no later than June 30 of the previous school year. Parents will be notified in English, Spanish, and other languages upon request, of the approved policy updates.

VI. Compliance

School administrators and teachers are encouraged to use positive reinforcement to obtain compliance with the requirements of the Dress Code Policy.

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Dress Code and Uniform Policy (continued)

VI. Compliance (cont.)

For every instance of non-compliance, the student will be given the opportunity to call home for a change of clothing or utilize available school-provided clothing. The administration will use their discretion when dealing with hardship cases.

The following procedures shall apply at the discretion of the administration:

1. The administrator or designee will meet with the student to identify root cause and determine a solution.
2. For persistent dress code issues, parents/guardians will be notified and brought into the restorative process to determine an immediate solution in conjunction with student support personnel.
3. Other actions at the discretion of the administrator and in conjunction with restorative practices.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-221 concerning Dress Code
PA 96-101 An Act Concerning School Uniforms
Byars et. al. v. City of Waterbury et. al. (June 3, 1999)

New London Public Schools Dress Code

The following are the current dress code guidelines. These guidelines shall be distributed to all students, parents and/or guardians. Students are expected to dress in styles that promote a positive, safe, serious educational environment. The following items shall not be worn in accordance with the Dress Code Policy:

1. Footwear which marks/damages floors or is a safety hazard. Bedroom shoes or slippers shall not be worn, except for school activities approved by the principal.
2. Sunglasses (unless required by a doctor's order).
3. Clothing, jewelry or accessories which could cause harm to oneself or others.
4. Attire or accessories which portray disruptive writing or pictures, or display or imply vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene language.
5. Attire or accessories which state, imply, or depict hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected classification.
6. Attire or accessories which depict or imply pornography, nudity or sexual acts.
7. Attire or accessories which depict logo or emblems that encourage the use of drugs, tobacco products, or alcoholic beverages or encourage or incite violent acts.
8. Attire or accessories which can, at times, for some students, create a hostile school environment. (i.e., gang-related attire)
9. Shirts and/or blouses that reveal the abdomen, navel, chest or undergarments, or tank tops.
10. Shorts, miniskirts, or pants that reveal the upper thigh or undergarments.
11. Backpacks and/or book bags may be carried between classes but should not pose an obstruction to safe passage in the classroom or in the corridors.

For further clarity on allowable clothing, please reference the guidelines and specifications listed below.

1. Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately 3 to 4 inches in length on the upper thighs. Tops must have shoulder straps. Rips or tears in clothing should be lower than 3 to 4 inches in length.
2. Shoes must be worn at all times.
3. See-through or mesh garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath that meet the minimum requirements as listed in number 1 of these specifications.
4. Specialized Courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.

The administration may establish additional guidelines prohibiting other specific articles of clothing, accessories or the like.