

STUDENT DRESS

P5323

Students are expected to meet reasonable standards with regards to health, safety, and cleanliness, and to dress in a way that is appropriate for the learning environment. Students shall have the right to express themselves through their dress and appearance choices, and should also respect the school district's intent to sustain an inclusive learning community that supports a diverse range of identities.

The district is responsible for ensuring that student dress choices do not interfere with the health and safety of any student, do not create a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student, and do not cause any disruption or disorder within the school. Prohibited items include any clothing depicting hate speech, profanity, pornography, violent images or language; clothing with images or language depicting drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other controlled substances; and clothing or accessories that could be considered dangerous, used as weapons, or could cause damage to school property.

School staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and equitably, and in a manner that respects the privacy, comfort, and well-being of the student. Dress code enforcement should not reinforce or increase marginalization of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, body maturity, or body type/size. Conversations about dress choice should be a collaborative discussion with the student to achieve an appropriate and satisfactory solution. If necessary, the student's parents or guardians may be contacted to help address the issue. Should a satisfactory solution not be reached, decisions regarding the safety, respect, or disruption of the learning environment will be made by the building principal.

School-based student handbooks may include more specific student dress guidelines regarding wellness classes, specialized programs, safety considerations, and school-sponsored events. Specific dress suggestions for classroom activities, extra-curricular activities, school ceremonies, school photos, field trips and other special events shall be inclusive, gender-neutral, and accessible to all students. Individual dress code accommodations may be made based on a student's disability or medical, religious, or sensory needs.

Massachusetts General Law References:

M.G.L. Chapter 71:Section 82 – Rights of Students to Freedom of Expression
M.G.L. Chapter 72:Section 83 – Dress and Appearance of Students Protected

Westford Public Schools Policy References:

P5203 – Religious Expression
P5325 – Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Student
P5302 – Student Handbooks

Massachusetts Association of School Committee Policy References:

JICA – Student Dress Code

CHCA - Approval of Handbooks and Directives

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WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Westford, Massachusetts
