

## Northampton County Board of Education

### Student Dress Code Policy

#### Purpose

The primary goal of the Northampton County Schools is to provide a safe learning environment where all students are able to achieve at their highest potential. The personal appearance of every student is an important component of establishing a safe environment for optimal learning and respect for one another. Students are expected to adhere to standards of dress and appearance that are compatible with an effective learning environment. In support of these goals and expectations the Board establishes the following dress code for students:

#### Exceptions/Special Circumstances

The administration shall make reasonable accommodations on the basis of a student's religious beliefs or medical conditions. Guardians seeking exemption from this policy should submit an application for exemption to be reviewed by the principal.

#### Dress Code Regulations

Clothing and accessories that interrupt or disrupt the school learning environment are prohibited. Prohibited clothing and accessories include, but are not limited to, items that promote gang or gang related activities and items that contain vulgar, insolent, or sexually explicit material. Any school system employee may alert a school administrator to a dress code policy violation.

#### Pants/Capris/Gauchos:

- All pants worn as the outer garment must be worn at a student's waistline. For the purposes of this policy, the waistline is the narrowest point of the human body between the ribcage and hips.
- If pants have belt loops, students must wear a belt.
- Pants must have no more than 6 pockets.
- Excessively baggy or tight fitting pants are prohibited.
- Undergarments/underwear **shall not** be visible at any time.
- Pants with holes in the buttocks or groin area are prohibited.
- If pants have holes in the front or back leg area of the pants, the holes may not be any wider in diameter than that of the student's hand. In addition, leggings, tights, or long johns must be worn under the pants with holes in order to cover exposed skin.
- Pajamas are prohibited.
- Leggings and tight spandex are prohibited, unless worn under pants.
- Dress code requirements may be waived by the principal during school spirit week, subject to superintendent approval.

**Tops:**

- Tops that reveal underwear, cleavage, or bare skin between the upper chest and the waistline are prohibited.
- Sleeveless tops are prohibited.
- Polo shirts, turtleneck shirts, T-shirts, and collared blouses/shirts are allowed.
- V-neck T-shirts may not be worn as an outer layer.
- Visibility of shoulders and midriffs is prohibited.
- Undergarments **must not** be visible.
- Un-tucked shirts of excessive length are prohibited.
- For the purposes of this policy, the waistline is the narrowest point of the human body between the ribcage and hips.

**Skirts/Shorts/Skort/Jumpers:**

- These items must be worn at the waistline and must extend to at the middle of the entire thigh.
- For the purposes of this policy, the waistline is the narrowest point of the human body between the ribcage and hips.

**Outerwear:**

- Light outerwear, such as sweatshirts, vests, and sweaters may be worn.
- Heavy coats are permitted, but must be removed upon entry into the classroom.

**Shoes:**

- Steel toes, cleats, bedroom shoes, high heels of greater than 2 inches, flip flops, Chinese slippers, and heelies are prohibited.
- Shoes with laces must be properly laced and tied.

**Other:**

- Caps, hats, earmuffs, head coverings of any kind, and sunglasses are prohibited inside school buildings.
- Large chains/jewelry and belt buckles are prohibited.

**Consequences for Violation of Dress Code Policy**

- **1st Offense**  
Covering of items and/or bare skin, if applicable, and parent meeting or telephone call regarding policy compliance.

- **2nd Offense**

Covering of items and/or bare skin, if applicable, and parent meeting or telephone call regarding policy compliance. Maximum of 2 days of in-school suspension at the middle and high school levels. Appropriate disciplinary action—not to include out of school suspension—at the elementary school level. In addition, the school Administrator may revoke the student’s privileges to attend and/or participate in any school-sponsored extra-curricular activities, including a student’s participation in athletic competition.

- **3rd Offense (and all subsequent offenses)**

Covering of items, if applicable. Maximum of 3 days of out of school suspension (“OSS”) and a parent conference. The three days OSS shall be reduced by the school administrator if the parent arranges for a parent conference (to include the student) on or before the third day of suspension and the parent enters into an agreement stating that the student will comply with the dress code policy in the future. If such a parent conference is held, the OSS shall end on the day of the parent conference. This provision may only be utilized once to shorten the length of the three day out of school suspension. In addition to the three days OSS, the school Administrator may revoke the student’s privileges to attend and/or participate in any school-sponsored extra-curricular activities, including a student’s participation in athletic competition, or require the student to participate in a program for solution based intervention. If the student drives, his/her privileges to drive to school may be suspended, and/or the student may be placed on lunch restrictions for up to three consecutive days.

### **Applicability**

This policy shall apply to all students in all school buildings during the regular school day, on field trips, and when students represent the school. This policy shall also apply to all students at all times on all Board of Education property; including in school buildings and on school grounds; on all school buses and other school vehicles. This policy does not apply to school sanctioned uniforms and costumes for athletic, choral, or dramatic performances with the prior written approval of the principal.

LEGAL REF: G.S. 115C-47, 115C-390.1 *et seq.*, U.S. v. O’Brien (US 1968); Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (US 1969), and Bethel School District v. Frazier (US 1986)

ADOPTED: October 5, 2009

REVISED: March 13, 2017

### **REFERENCE A: Religious Exemptions**

Upon written request from the parent/guardian of a student, the principal or principal's designee may, as a reasonable accommodation under the Dress Code Policy, exempt the student from the requirements of the Dress Code Policy when compliance with those requirements would impose a substantial burden on the exercise of a sincerely held religious belief.

In making determinations regarding exemptions to the Dress Code Policy, the principal or principal's designee shall not attempt to determine whether the religious beliefs are valid but only whether they are sincerely held. To assist in deciding whether an exemption is warranted, the principal or principal's designee may request the parent/guardian to provide information in writing demonstrating: (1) that the objection to the requirements of the Dress Code Policy is grounded in religious tenets rather than mere personal preference; (2) that the religious beliefs are sincerely held; and (3) that compliance with the requirements of the Dress Code Policy will interfere with the exercise of those beliefs.

### **REFERENCE B: Medical Exemption**

Upon written request from the parent/guardian of a student, the principal or principal's designee may, as a reasonable accommodation under the Dress Code Policy, exempt the student from the requirements of the Dress Code Policy when medical necessity prevents a student's compliance with the Dress Code Policy.

In making determinations regarding medical exemptions to the Dress Code Policy, the principal or principal's designee may request the parent/guardian to provide information in writing demonstrating that the medical basis for the requested exemption is true and accurate.

**REFERENCE C: Application for Exemptions**

**Application for Exemption from the Student Dress Code Policy**

Name of person submitting this application: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of the student named above. I hereby request an exemption from the student Dress Code Policy on behalf of the above-named student for the current school year. I understand that this exemption is for the current school year only and must be renewed at the beginning of each subsequent year.

The reason for my application for this exemption is as follows: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the exemption will not be effective until after I have met with the school principal or his/her designee.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Principal/Designee

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Request

\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Conference