

July 11, 2006

Policy No. 5140

**HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**SCHOOL ATTIRE POLICY**

**1. Statement of Policy.**

It is the policy of the Hartford Board of Education to reasonably regulate the attire of students during the school day. To that end, all students in grades PK-8 shall wear a school uniform. Further, in order to maintain an educational environment that is safe and conducive to the educational process, students in all grades, PK-12, shall abstain from wearing or possessing specified items during the school day.

**2. Statement of Purpose.**

The Hartford Board of Education has determined that reasonable regulation of school attire can further important educational interests, including:

- a. Reducing distraction and loss of self-esteem caused by teasing or competition over clothing;
- b. Minimizing disruption from wearing inappropriate clothing or possessing inappropriate items at school;
- c. Providing an environment where students can focus more on learning;
- d. Enhancing school safety by making it harder to conceal weapons or contraband;
- e. Enhancing school safety by helping teachers and administrators to identify individuals that are not enrolled in the school when they encounter them on school grounds;
- f. Enhancing school safety by prohibiting gang colors and paraphernalia;
- g. Reducing the cost of school clothing;
- h. Providing an educational environment where financial disparities between students, as reflected in clothing, are minimized;
- i. Creating a greater sense of community and school pride amongst the students;
- j. Instilling discipline in students;
- k. Helping students and parents to avoid peer pressure;

- l. Helping to prepare students for future roles in the professional workplace; and
- m. Creating an atmosphere reflecting seriousness of purpose about education.

**3. Parental Responsibility.**

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their child/children dress in conformity with the requirements of this policy. It is the recommendation of professional school personnel that parents/guardians hold their children to the highest standard in regards to school attire. Parents/guardians should support the Board's efforts to create a level playing field for all students in Hartford and reduce many existing distractions, disruptions and safety concerns relating to student attire. Parents/guardians should further support the Board's efforts to create a more serious educational environment that is conducive to learning and which helps to prepare Hartford's students for future success in the professional workplace.

**4. Staff Responsibilities.**

School personnel, including substitutes, should serve as role models for proper attire in the educational setting. School personnel should ensure that all students adhere to the School Attire Policy.

**5. Clothing and Items Prohibited for All Grades, PK-12.**

In order to maintain an environment that is safe and conducive to the educational process, the Board of Education prohibits the wear of following for all grades in the Hartford Public School System during regular school hours:

- a. Attire or accessories that contain messages or images that would tend to be offensive or disruptive to the educational process, including racist messages or images; sexist messages, or images; messages or images promoting the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco; profane or pornographic messages or images; messages that incite violence or constitute "fighting words"; or attire or accessories that promote or signify gang affiliation.
- b. See-through clothing, clothing revealing bare midriffs, tank tops, halter tops, tube tops, undershirts or underpants worn as outer garments, clothing with plunging necklines (front or back), sleeveless shirts, exposed clothing made of spandex material, or clothing worn in such a manner as to expose undergarments.
- c. Bare feet, bedroom slippers, shower style flip-flops, roller blades, roller-skates, or footwear that mars floors, causes excessive noise, or creates a safety hazard.
- d. Head coverings of any kind, including but not limited to scarves, bandanas, curlers, masks, headbands, visors, kerchiefs, athletic sweatbands, hats, caps, earmuffs, or hoods. Head coverings shall not be worn, carried, hung on belts or

around the neck or kept in the classroom during regular school hours. However, approved coverings worn as part of a student's religious beliefs shall not be prohibited under this policy.

- e. Spiked or studded bracelets, oversized or multi-finger rings, belts or chains or any other articles of attire with spikes or studs attached, "Name" or other oversized metal belt buckles, or any other items of clothing or jewelry that may present a safety hazard to the student, other students or staff.
- f. Coats, jackets, windbreakers, nylon pullovers, down vests, or other attire normally worn as outerwear. Such outerwear shall not be worn, carried or kept in the classroom during regular school hours. Outerwear must be secured in the student's locker before school starts.
- g. Sunglasses, headphones, or other electronic devices not prescribed for educational purposes, or goggles, whether worn or carried.
- h. Skirts, shorts, skorts, dresses, or jumpers that are shorter than four (4) inches above the knee.

**6. Mandatory School Uniform for Elementary School Students, Grades PK-6.**

The following Uniform Policy is mandatory for all students in grades PK-6 beginning with the 2006-2007 school year.

- a. Boys shall wear the following uniform during school hours:
  - (1) Solid navy blue, khaki or gray pants or knee-length shorts. Pants and shorts must be "dress" or "docker" style. No blue jeans may be worn. All pants and knee-length shorts must be worn or belted at the waist.
  - (2) Solid light blue, yellow or white shirts. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for shirts. Shirts must have a collar and may be button down, polo or turtleneck. Shirts must be tucked in at all times, hem to reach the waistline when arms are raised. Sleeves may be long or short. No tee shirts may be worn.
  - (3) Shoes or sneakers with navy blue or white socks. Laces on shoes or sneakers must be tied. Footwear may not mar floors, cause excessive noise, or create a safety hazard.
  - (4) Sweaters, blazers or vests are optional, but must be navy blue or gray. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for sweaters, blazers and vests.

- (5) Gym Day Attire: Elementary school students may wear sweats to school on scheduled gym day. Sweats must be solid navy blue or gray. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for sweats.
  - (6) Backpacks and/or book bags are permitted, but shall not obstruct safe passage in the classroom or in the corridors.
- b. Girls shall wear the following uniform during school hours:
- (1) Solid navy blue, khaki or gray jumpers, skirts, skorts, pants or knee-length shorts. Pants and shorts must be “dress” or “docker” style. No blue jeans may be worn. All pants and knee-length shorts must be worn or belted at the waist.
  - (2) Solid light blue, yellow or white blouses. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for blouses. Blouses must have a collar and may be button down, polo or turtleneck. Blouses must be tucked in at all times, hem to reach the waistline when arms are raised. Sleeves may be long or short. No tee shirts may be worn.
  - (3) Shoes or sneakers with navy blue or white socks or tights. Laces on shoes or sneakers must be tied. Footwear may not mar floors, cause excessive noise, or create a safety hazard.
  - (4) Sweaters, blazers or vests are optional, but must be navy blue or gray. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for sweaters, blazers and vests.
  - (5) Gym Day Attire: Elementary school students may wear sweats to school on scheduled gym day. Sweats must be solid navy blue or gray. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for sweats.
  - (6) Backpacks and/or book bags are permitted, but shall not obstruct safe passage in the classroom or in the corridors.
- c. Compliance. All students are required to adhere to the required attire. School administrators and teachers are encouraged to use positive reinforcement to obtain compliance with school attire requirements. However, when a student fails to comply with the school attire policy, discipline is appropriate. The following discipline procedures shall apply:
- (1) First Offense: Verbal counseling and notification to parent/guardian.
  - (2) Second Offense: Written warning and notification to parent/guardian.

- (3) Third Offense: Written warning and mandatory meeting with parents to explain School Attire Policy and obtain compliance.
- (4) Fourth and Subsequent Offenses: At the principal's discretion, attendance at special programs and activities may be forfeited or withheld until the student comes to school in uniform. In addition, the student may be prohibited from participating with other students during recess. Instead, the student may be directed to walk or perform other exercise during the recess period without speaking or interacting with other students in an area to be designated by the principal. If the foregoing disciplinary measures do not achieve compliance with the School Attire Policy, the principal may impose stronger discipline, including detention (after-school or Saturday) or in-school suspension.
- (5) The Superintendent shall provide principals with standardized letters to be utilized for student warnings and notifications to parents/guardians.

**7. Mandatory School Uniform for Middle School Students, Grades 7-8.**

The following Uniform Policy is mandatory for all students in grades 7-8 beginning with the 2006-2007 school year.

- a. Boys shall wear the following uniform during school hours:
  - (1) Solid navy blue, gray or khaki color pants or knee-length shorts. Pants and shorts must be “dress” or “docked” style. No blue jeans may be worn. All pants and shorts must be worn or belted at the waist. No “cargo” style oversized pockets.
  - (2) Solid light blue, white, or yellow shirts. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for shirts. Shirts must have a collar and may be Oxford, polo or turtleneck style. Oxford shirts must be tucked in at all times. Polo shirts and turtlenecks may be worn outside or tucked into pants or shorts, hem to reach the waistline when arms are raised. Sleeves may be long or short. No tee shirts may be worn.
  - (3) Shoes or sneakers are allowed, provided they do not mar the floor, cause excessive noise or create a safety hazard. Laces on shoes or sneakers must be tied.
  - (4) Sweaters, vests or blazers are optional, but must be solid navy blue or gray, in cardigan, crew or v-neck style. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for sweaters, vests and blazers.
  - (5) Backpacks and/or book bags are permitted, but shall not obstruct safe passage in the classroom or in the corridors.

- b. Girls shall wear the following uniform during school hours:
- (1) Solid navy blue, gray or khaki jumpers, skirts, skorts, pants, capris, or shorts. Pants and shorts must be “dress” or “docked” style. No blue jeans may be worn. All pants and shorts must be worn or belted at the waist. Jumpers, skirts, skorts, and shorts must be no higher than 4” above the knee.
  - (2) Solid light blue, white, or yellow blouses. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for blouses. Blouses must have a collar and may be Oxford, polo or turtleneck style. Oxford shirts must be tucked in at all times. Polo shirts and turtlenecks may be worn outside or tucked in, hem to reach the waistline when arms are raised. Sleeves may be long or short. No tee shirts may be worn.
  - (3) Shoes or sneakers are allowed, provided they do not mar the floor, cause excessive noise or create a safety hazard. Laces on shoes or sneakers must be tied.
  - (4) Sweaters, vests or blazers are optional, but must be solid navy blue or gray, in cardigan, crew or v-neck style. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for sweaters, vests and blazers.
  - (5) Backpacks and/or book bags are permitted, but shall not obstruct safe passage in the classroom or in the corridors.
- c. Compliance. All students are required to adhere to the required attire. School administrators and teachers are encouraged to use positive reinforcement to obtain compliance with school attire requirements. However, when a student fails to comply with the school attire policy, discipline is appropriate. The following discipline procedures shall apply:
- (1) First Offense: Verbal counseling and notification to parent/guardian.
  - (2) Second Offense: Written warning and notification to parent/guardian.
  - (3) Third and Fourth Offense: Detention (after-school or Saturday).
  - (4) Fifth and Subsequent Offenses: One-day in-school suspension. After ten (10) days of in-school suspension a student will be subject to review for further discipline.
  - (5) The Superintendent shall provide principals with standardized letters to be utilized for student warnings and notifications to parents/guardians.

**8. Voluntary School Uniform for High School Students, Grades 9-12.**

A school principal may institute a voluntary school uniform for high school students, grades 9-12, provided that parents and staff are surveyed and indicate support for a voluntary school uniform, and further provided that the principal requests and obtains approval for the voluntary school uniform policy from the Board of Education. High Schools that previously enacted voluntary school uniform policies under the Board's prior School Uniforms policy, may continue those policies, provided they provide for religious and health accommodations, free expression accommodation, and clothing assistance as described in this policy.

**9. Exceptions for Designated Days or Events.**

Each school principal may periodically designate specific days or events (i.e. school picnic, field day, or spirit week) during which deviations from the approved uniform will be permitted, provided the principal determines that such exceptions will facilitate the event, promote school spirit, or otherwise serve an educational interest.

**10. Exceptions for Schools That Previously Implemented School Uniforms**

The Board recognizes that some schools have already enacted voluntary school uniform policies and that some parents may have purchased clothing to meet those policies. Any School that has already enacted voluntary uniform policy may request an exception from the Hartford Public Schools Board of Education to allow its uniform to be authorized attire at that school in addition to or in lieu of the uniform clothing authorized under this policy. The Board or its designee will issue a written decision approving or denying the request for exception in whole or in part, and may grant exceptions for a limited period of time. In addition, any newly constructed magnet school may request an exception from the Hartford Public Schools Board of Education to allow its chosen uniform to be authorized attire at that school in addition to or in lieu of the uniform clothing authorized under this policy.

**11. Religious and Health Accommodations.**

Where the bona fide religious beliefs or health needs of a student conflict with the school attire policy, the schools will provide reasonable accommodation. Any student desiring accommodation shall notify their school principal in writing of the requested accommodation and the factual basis for the request. Approved coverings worn as part of a student's bona fide religious practices or beliefs shall not be prohibited under this policy.

**12. Clothing Assistance.**

It is the policy of the Board of Education that no student will be denied an education due to bona fide financial inability to obtain clothing that complies with the Board's Attire Policy. Any student, for whom compliance with the school attire policy poses a bona fide financial burden, may submit a written request for clothing assistance to their school principal specifying the clothing needed together with a statement of financial need. The Superintendent shall provide principals with standardized forms to be completed by parents/guardians seeking

clothing assistance. School principals or their designees shall assist families in financial need to obtain clothing that complies with the school attire policy. In meeting requests for assistance, principals or their designees shall consider community resources such as clothing or financial donations from corporations, members of the community, local businesses, parent organizations, and charitable organizations; clothing discounts from local merchants; and providing additional time for a student to obtain clothing that complies with the School Attire Policy. Where other resources or accommodations are inadequate, a principal may submit a request for assistance to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall ensure that necessary clothing or financial assistance is provided to the principal, who in turn shall address the clothing needs of the student.

**13. Accommodation of Free Expression.**

An item of approved clothing containing an expressive message is permitted. For example, a button supporting a political candidate may be worn. However, expressive items are prohibited if, in the reasonable judgment of school officials, they may tend to disrupt or interfere with educational interests. For example, racist messages, sexist messages, gang insignia, messages promoting drug or alcohol abuse, and profane or pornographic messages or images are prohibited. Also prohibited during the school day are items of clothing that undermine the integrity of required attire, such as a windbreaker that contains expressive writing.

**14. One-Time Grace Period Regarding Discipline**

Notwithstanding the foregoing disciplinary procedures, there will be a one-time grace period of 21 days at the start of the 2006-2007 school year during which students will not be disciplined for failing to wear the mandatory uniform clothing. During this grace period students will be encouraged to obtain and wear clothing that meets the uniform requirements. After the completion of this one-time grace period, the foregoing disciplinary procedures will go into effect to address any continuing non-compliance.

**15. Out of District Transfers**

Any student transferring into the Hartford School District from another school district during the course of a school year will be allowed a grace period of 21 days to obtain clothing that meets the school uniform requirements. During the 21-day grace period that student will be encouraged to comply with the uniform requirements but will not be disciplined for failure to do so. Following the 21-day grace period, that student would be subject to discipline for non-compliance.

**16. Administrative Review.**

Any student who believes that their school has not reasonably accommodated his or her bona fide religious, health or financial needs or right of free expression, may submit a written objection on their own or through their parents/guardians to the school's principal. The principal shall respond in writing to the student and his or her parents/guardians within fourteen (14) days. Any student or parent/guardian dissatisfied with the principal's response may submit a written

appeal to the Hartford Public Schools Board of Education. The Board or its designee may request such additional information from the school, the student, and/or the parents/guardians as it deems necessary. The Board or its designee shall issue a written decision on the appeal within twenty-one (21) days.

Policy Adopted July 11, 2006

HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Hartford, Connecticut

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statute Section 10-221f (1996) (“[a] local or regional board of education may specify a school uniform for students under its jurisdiction.”).

Policy Number 5131.1(a), Students, Dress and Grooming, School Uniforms is rescinded.

Policy Number 5140(a), Student Dress, adopted 9/14/99 and updated 11/1/05 is rescinded.

Policy Number 5140, Hartford Public Schools School Attire Policy dated 6/6/06 is rescinded.

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