

Students

Student Attire

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 and during school-sponsored activities. To that end, all students in primary and secondary schools 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 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. Administrator Responsibilities

- a. Principals will distribute to parents annually the names of all local uniform vendors who have confirmed that they have the capacity to provide the specifications of their uniforms, including cost.
- b. There shall be no sole source vendors of school uniforms. The superintendent, or designee, will send to the Board of Education annually, a list of all vendors that provide uniforms at each school.
- c. Changes to a school uniform or logo shall be approved by the School Governance Council. Principals will notify parents by March 1, of any school year, if all or part, of the school uniform will change for the following school year.

Students

Student Attire (continued)

- d. Whenever possible, the Hartford Public Schools shall provide logos that can be sewed or ironed onto the uniforms that meet the requirements of this policy, at any school that elects to have a school uniform with a specific logo.

4. **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 eliminate 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.

5. **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. All personnel, particularly teachers and administrators, are encouraged to model their school's uniform in their own attire.

6. **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 midribs, 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 hats, caps, scarves, bandanas, curlers, masks, visors, kerchiefs, athletic sweatbands, earmuffs, or hoods. Head coverings shall not be worn, carried, hung on belts or around the neck or kept in

Students

Student Attire (continued)

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.

7. Mandatory School Uniform for Elementary School Students

The following Uniform Policy is mandatory for all students in Hartford elementary schools:

- a. Boys' Uniforms.
 - (1) Individual schools may choose an authorized color scheme for shirts and pants. Shirts must have a collar and may be button down, polo or turtleneck. Shirts must be tucked in at all times. Sleeves may be long or short. No tee shirts may be worn. Pants or shorts may be dress or "docket" style and must be worn or belted at the waist.
 - (2) Shoes or sneakers with socks. Laces on shoes or sneakers must be tied. Footwear may not mar floors, cause excessive noise, or create a safety hazard.
 - (3) Individual schools may choose additional colors and styles for sweaters, blazers and vests.
 - (4) Gym Day Attire: Students may wear sweats to school on scheduled gym day. Individual schools may choose authorized additional gym attire.
 - (5) Backpacks and/or book bags are permitted, but shall not obstruct safe passage in the classroom or in the corridors.

Students

Student Attire (continued)

- b. Girls' Uniforms.
 - (1) Individual schools may choose an authorized color scheme for blouses, jumpers, skirts, pants or knee-length shorts. Blouses must have a collar and may be button down, polo or turtleneck. Blouses must be tucked in at all times. Sleeves may be long or short. No tee shirts may be worn. If pants or shorts are worn, they must be "dress" or "docker" style and must be worn or belted at the waist.
 - (2) Shoes or sneakers with socks or tights. Laces on shoes or sneakers must be tied. Footwear may not mar floors, cause excessive noise, or create a safety hazard.
 - (3) Individual schools may choose additional colors and styles for sweaters, blazers and vests.
 - (4) Gym Day Attire: Students may wear sweats to school on scheduled gym day. Sweats must reflect the color of the school uniform. Individual schools may choose authorized additional gym attire.
 - (5) Backpacks and/or book bags are permitted, but shall not obstruct safe passage in the classroom or in the corridors.
- c. Compliance.
 - (1) All students are required to adhere to their school's uniform and are expected to attend classes in a complete uniform. For financial and emergency reasons schools should maintain a supply of uniforms which students may borrow, to enable all students to attend class. Principal discretion may be used in unique situations.

8. Mandatory School Uniform for Secondary School Students

At the point of inception, Independent Secondary Schools and Academies will designate complete uniforms reflective of their mission, career theme and/or post-secondary education focus in a single color scheme. Dress uniforms or blazers and ties are required for upper classmen and women (grades 11-12) participating in internships.

All students are required to adhere to the required attire and are expected to attend classes in a complete uniform. For financial and emergency reasons schools shall maintain uniform components that students may borrow to ensure that all students may attend class. Principal discretion may be used in unique situations.

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,

Students

Student Attire (continued)

provided the principal determines that such exceptions will facilitate the event, promote school spirit, or otherwise serve an educational interest.

10. 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 parent or 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. The superintendent shall develop procedures for the verification of religious and health exemptions.

11. 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. 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 Assistant Superintendent of Schools. The Assistant 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.

12. Accommodation of Free Expression

An item of approved clothing containing an expressive message is permitted. For example, a small 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.

Students

Student Attire (continued)

13. 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.

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.
Policy Number 5140, Hartford Public Schools School Attire Policy dated 7/11/06 is revised.
Policy Number 5140, Hartford Public Schools School Attire Policy dated 6/13/08 is revised.
Policy Number 5140, Hartford Public Schools School Attire Policy dated 8/19/08 is adopted.
Policy Number 5140, Hartford Public Schools School Attire Policy dated 12/21/10 is revised.

Revised: January 15, 2013

HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Hartford, Connecticut