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## The School Board of Miami-Dade County

### Bylaws & Policies

Unless a specific policy has been amended and the date the policy was revised is noted at the bottom of that policy, the Bylaws and Policies of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools were adopted on May 11, 2011 and were in effect beginning July 1, 2011.

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#### 5511 - DRESS CODE AND SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Students shall come to school clean and appropriately groomed and dressed. Students whose personal attire or grooming distracts the attention of other students or teachers from their school work shall be required to make necessary alterations before entering the classroom or be sent home by the Principal. Students who fail to meet the minimum acceptable standards of cleanliness and neatness as determined by the principal and as specified in this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with Policy [5500](#), and the *Code of Student Conduct*.

##### Dress Code

- A. This District dress code is intended to regulate the clothing students may wear to school based on the health, safety, and cleanliness of students, to minimize the distraction of students from classroom activities, to prevent disruption of a school program, and to reduce excessive maintenance of school property.
- B. The determination of what constitutes a safety or health hazard, or what constitutes a distraction of students from a classroom activity, or what constitutes a disruption of a school program or excessive maintenance of school property shall be made by the teacher, other District employee concerned, and the Principal.
- C. Disciplinary action may be taken to encourage compliance with the policy. Since the intent of the policy is not to inhibit or prohibit any student who is not in compliance with the dress code from receiving the education to which they are entitled, no student shall be suspended from class or from school, expelled from school, or receive a lowered academic grade as a result of noncompliance.
- D. Except for schools participating in a mandatory or voluntary school uniform program (see below), senior high schools desiring to establish regulations that go beyond or deviate from this District dress code must have them approved by the Region Superintendent and adopted by the Board. Individual school dress regulations must be submitted to the Superintendent prior to the opening of the school year for which the dress code is effective.
- E. Once a dress code has been approved by the Board, it need only be re-submitted if additional changes are made.

##### Mandatory Uniforms

To promote a safe and supportive learning environment and improve school safety and discipline, all students in K-8 schools shall participate in a mandatory uniform program. Students in grades 9-12

may participate in a mandatory uniform program as follows:

- A. For students in grades 9-12 only, the Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC) may determine that a vote should be taken during the spring of any given year provided that notification of the intent to vote is submitted by February of the year in which the voting is to occur to the Regional Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent, District/School Operations. Voting shall occur on a specific, advertised date(s) to be effective the following school year.

At least fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) of the parents in that school who vote, must vote in favor of establishing a mandatory uniform program. This vote will stand for a minimum of three (3) school years, at which time the EESAC may determine if a subsequent vote is warranted.

New senior high schools shall conduct an initial vote in the spring of their opening year, and thereafter, conduct votes according to the established procedures for all schools.

- B. Every school participating in the mandatory uniform program shall establish a uniform committee that adequately represents administrators, teachers, students, and parents and follows guidelines promulgated by the Superintendent for selection of uniforms. The committee cannot select a uniform company as an "official uniform company" for a school. The committee can identify a uniform company as a "preferred" option but [parents must be advised that the selected uniform or a generic option can be purchased from a variety of sources, such as other uniform companies, department stores, catalogs, etc.](#) The uniform committee may determine whether the school logo patch will be required.
- C. The school-selected uniforms may prohibit types or styles of clothing (e.g., shorts, pants, dresses, and certain types of sweatshirts and jackets). The uniform chosen may consist of (1) solid colored clothing and fabrics for pants, skirts, shorts, or similar clothing, and (2) short or long-sleeved shirts with collars. The uniform also may include a small logo but may not allow mottos or slogans and must comply with all other provisions of this policy concerning appropriate attire.
- D. The uniforms selected shall not be characterized as gender-specific.
- E. The school shall provide for those students who, by reason of financial hardship, cannot comply with the mandatory uniform policy and notify parents of these provisions.
- F. Exceptions to wearing the uniform are permitted when:
  - 1. Uniforms of a nationally recognized youth organization such as the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts are worn on regular meeting days.
  - 2. A student wears a button, armband, or other accouterment to exercise the right to freedom of speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment unless they signify or are related to gangs, gang membership, or gang activity.
  - 3. Wearing a school uniform violates a student's sincerely held religious belief.
  - 4. A student's parent requests a reasonable accommodation to address a student's disability.
  - 5. The principal has authorized a "no-uniform" day as a fundraiser or reward. The principal may also authorize club shirt or uniform days, and school or community spirit days, in which the mandatory school uniform will not be required.

- G. Exemptions from the mandatory uniform program may be obtained as follows:

1. A request may be made in writing or in person by the parent for an Application for Exemption from the Uniform Program ("Application") which is available at the student's school site. Students exempted from the mandatory uniform program must adhere to the school's dress code.
  2. The application must be completed in full and submitted to the Principal.
  3. The Principal then meets with the parents to discuss the uniform policy and the objections to the policy. The purposes of this meeting include: (1) verifying the accuracy of the information on the application; and (2) preventing fraud or misrepresentation.
  4. Parents should be notified of the exemption procedure.
- H. Compliance with a mandatory uniform policy shall be implemented as follows:
1. Each school shall develop and use incentives and positive reinforcement measures to encourage and achieve full compliance with the uniform policy and should resort to disciplinary action only when positive measures fail to ensure compliance. Schools shall communicate with parents so that expectations, rationale, and benefits are fully understood by students and families.
  2. Disciplinary action may be taken to encourage compliance with the policy. Since the intent of the policy is not to inhibit or prohibit any student who is not in uniform from receiving the education to which they are entitled, no student shall be suspended from class or from school, expelled from school, or receive a lowered academic grade as a result of noncompliance.
  3. Disciplinary action may be initiated only after all other means to secure support and cooperation have not succeeded. Schools shall use "progressive discipline" to encourage full and consistent compliance with the least amount of disciplinary action.
  4. Prior to initiating any disciplinary action against a student for not complying with the policy, a school administrator or counselor shall hold a conference with the parent to solicit cooperation and support.
- I. The school participates as requested in any required evaluation of the mandatory school uniform program.
- J. The Board is immune from any civil liability resulting from adoption of this mandatory uniform policy.

### **Standards for Evaluating the Appropriateness of Dress/Grooming**

- A. A student with hair of such length or style that it creates classroom or school disorder, or distracts the attention of another student or students in any class in session from the lesson being presented or from any other assigned classroom activity, or which creates a safety or health hazard for any student in a classroom will be required to change the length or style of the hair. Failure on the part of a student to comply with this requirement shall result in disciplinary measures which may include suspension from school.

- B. A student who wears items of clothing which, because of fit, design, color, texture, inadequate coverage, or some other factor, create classroom or school disorder or distract the attention of another student or students in any class in session from the lesson being presented or from any other assigned school activity, or which create a safety or health hazard for any student in school, shall be required to change the clothing to eliminate the disorder, distraction, or hazard. Failure on the part of a student to do so shall result in disciplinary measures which may include suspension from school.
- C. A student who fails to maintain personal cleanliness, grooming, or neatness of dress which creates classroom or school disorder or distracts the attention of others from assigned classroom activity will be required to maintain a level of personal cleanliness, grooming, or neatness of dress that eliminates the disorder or the distraction of other students. Failure to do so shall result in discipline which may include suspension from school.
- D. Articles of clothing that cause excessive maintenance problems of school property -- for example, shoe cleats that scratch floors or tear rugs, trousers with metal rivets that scratch furniture – are not allowed. Students who fail to change articles of clothing of this type after being instructed to do so by school employees are subject to discipline which may include suspension from school.

The time, the specific location, the type of activity going on, and whether the alleged offense is the first or repetitious on the part of a student must all be considered when disciplining a student. The primary consideration is correction of a problem by the quickest and most reasonable method so that the instructional program for students may proceed with the least possible disruption.

F.S. 1001.43

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