

## **Policy 5132: Dress And Grooming**

**Status:** ADOPTED

**Original Adopted Date:** 10/01/1996 | **Last Revised Date:** 10/01/2019 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 10/01/2019

CSBA NOTE: The following policy may be revised to reflect district practice. Pursuant to Education Code 35183, districts that adopt a school uniform policy are mandated to include specified provisions; see section on "Uniforms" below.

The Governing Board believes that appropriate dress and grooming contribute to a productive learning environment. The Board expects students to wear clothing that is suitable for the school activities in which they participate. Students shall not wear clothing that presents a health or safety hazard or causes a substantial disruption to the educational program.

District and school rules pertaining to student attire shall be included in student handbooks, may be posted in school offices and classrooms, and may be periodically reviewed with all students as necessary.

Students shall not be prohibited from dressing in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression or with their religious or cultural observance.

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 212.1, as amended by SB 188 (Ch. 58, Statutes of 2019), defines "race," for purposes of prohibiting discrimination, as including traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles.

In addition, the dress code shall not discriminate against students based on hair texture and protective hairstyles, including, but not limited to, braids, locks, and twists. (Education Code 212.1)

CSBA NOTE: While students do not lose their constitutional rights by virtue of entering school grounds, numerous court decisions have found that the First Amendment rights of public school students are not necessarily the same as the rights of adults in other settings and must be viewed in light of the special circumstances of the school environment. In *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a school may limit student expression as long as its decision is reasonably related to "legitimate pedagogical concerns." For instance, districts may prohibit clothing that is vulgar or causes a substantial disruption to the educational program. Districts may also prohibit clothing that promotes drug use. While districts can regulate clothing that causes a "substantial disruption," districts cannot regulate student clothing simply because the district does not approve of the message displayed. The district's ability to prohibit "hate speech," including clothing with derogatory or demeaning messages, is unclear. The 9th Circuit Court in *Harper v. Poway Unified School District* ruled that a school could prohibit a student from wearing a t-shirt with a religious viewpoint against homosexuality, citing a provision in *Tinker v. Des Moines* which held that schools may prohibit speech that "intrudes upon the rights of other students" and interferes with their learning. However, because the student had graduated, the U.S. Supreme Court vacated the Harper decision on appeal and thus its analysis cannot be relied upon. It is recommended that the district consult legal counsel in the development of this policy and whenever it has questions about the appropriate enforcement of this policy based on student expression.

The principal or designee is authorized to enforce this policy and shall inform any student who does not reasonably conform to the dress code. The dress code shall not be enforced in a manner that discriminates against a particular viewpoint or results in a disproportionate application of the dress code based on students' gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, household income, or body type or size.

School administrators, teachers, and other staff shall be notified of appropriate and equitable enforcement of the dress code.

When practical, students shall not be directed to correct a dress code violation during instructional time or in front of other students.

Repeated violations or refusal to comply with the district's dress code may result in disciplinary action.

### **Gang-Related Apparel**

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 35183 authorizes the Governing Board to approve a site-initiated plan that prohibits the school's students from wearing gang-related apparel. The definition of "gang-related apparel" must be limited to apparel that reasonably could be determined to threaten the health and safety of the school environment, and the Board's approval must be based on a determination the policy is necessary for the health and safety of the school environment. In *Marvin H. Jeglin et al v. San Jacinto Unified School District et al*, a federal district court held that in

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The Board of Education believes that appropriate student dress contributes to a productive learning environment, and that students' clothing must not present a health or safety hazard or a distraction which would interfere with the educational process.

At the beginning of each school year, students and parents/guardians shall be informed in writing about the school dress code. A student who violates the school dress code shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

When gangs constitute a danger to students, the Superintendent or designee may restrict student dress, as necessary, to comply with Board policy related to school safety and gang activity.

**Uniforms or Common Student Dress**

The Board recognizes that in order to promote student safety and discourage theft, peer rivalry, and/or gang activity, the principal, staff, and parents/guardians within a district school may elect to establish a reasonable school dress code requiring students to wear uniforms or common student dress (CSO).

The Board shall approve either a uniform or common student dress code when it determines that such a code promotes the academic focus and/or health and safety of a school's students.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures whereby parents/guardians may elect to have their children exempted from an adopted school uniform or common student dress policy. The CSD exemption process shall include a designated deadline for parents/guardians to complete and submit a CSD Waiver Exemption form for that year. Students shall not be penalized academically, or otherwise discriminated against or denied attendance to school, if their parents/guardians do decide to request an exemption waiver.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that resources and criteria are identified for student assistance in purchasing uniforms/common student dress.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures whereby common student dress code may be evaluated to determine whether common student dress should continue, be rescinded, or be modified.

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order to justify a gang-related dress code, there must be evidence of a gang presence at a school and actual or threatened disruption or material interference with school activity. Education Code 32282 specifies that for the purpose of establishing a schoolwide dress code, gang-related apparel shall not be considered a protected form of speech pursuant to Education Code 48950.

District policy should not include a districtwide prohibition against wearing gang-related apparel. Pursuant to Education Code 35183, such a dress code must be initiated at the school-site level and apply only to the school where it is initiated.

The principal, staff, and parents/guardians at a school may establish a reasonable dress code that prohibits students from wearing gang-related apparel when there is evidence of a gang presence that disrupts or threatens to disrupt the school's activities. Such a proposed dress code shall be presented to the Board, which shall approve the plan upon determining that it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the school environment. The dress code policy may be included in the school's comprehensive safety plan. (Education Code 35183)

When determining specific items of clothing that may be defined as gang apparel, the school shall ensure that the determination is free from bias based on race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, or other protected characteristics.

## Uniforms

CSBA NOTE: In *Jacobs v. Clark County School District*, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals held that a district policy requiring students to wear school uniforms did not violate students' First Amendment right to freedom of speech or expression, as such policies are viewpoint-neutral and content-neutral and not intended to suppress the expression of particular ideas.

Pursuant to Education Code 35183, the Board may approve a school-initiated plan that requires a school's students to wear uniforms when the Board determines that the policy is necessary for the health and safety of the school environment.

The Board may approve a school-initiated dress code requiring students at the school to wear a school uniform whenever the Board determines that such a dress code will promote student achievement, a positive school climate, and/or student safety.

CSBA NOTE: If the Board adopts a dress code policy requiring uniforms for any school, Education Code 35183 requires that the Board provide a method whereby parents/guardians may choose to have their children exempted from the adopted school uniform policy. Education Code 35183 mandates that the Board policy include a statement that such students shall not be penalized academically, otherwise discriminated against, or denied attendance to school.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures whereby parents/guardians may choose to have their children exempted from the school uniform policy. Students shall not be penalized academically, otherwise discriminated against, or denied attendance to school if their parents/guardians so decide. (Education Code 35183)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that resources are identified to assist economically disadvantaged students in obtaining uniforms. (Education Code 35183)

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