

# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES OF THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 8.20 UNIFORMS AND STUDENT DRESS CODE

The following procedures have been established to provide guidance for the establishment of school uniforms in traditional schools.

### **(1) BASIC UNIFORM GUIDELINES**

(a) The basic district uniform shall be tan, navy blue, or black khaki-style pants, skirt, or jumper and a navy blue or black long-sleeve or short-sleeve shirt with a collar (polo-style, dress-style, or turtleneck). A student may wear any combination of the official district uniform colors or school-based colors as identified by the principal and school governance council.

(b) Full-length pants, cropped pants, cargo pants, and straight-legged capri pants are permitted. Denim jeans, pedal pushers, and bell bottoms are not permitted.

(c) Walking shorts are permitted for elementary, middle-school, junior-high, and high-school students. (Walking shorts are straight-legged, knee-length shorts.)

(d) Pants must fit at the waist and not be oversized or undersized (e.g., baggy pants, sagging pants, tights, or pants made of spandex are prohibited.). If belts are worn, they must be fitted and put through belt loops.

(e) Skirts or jumpers must be at or below the knee.

(f) Shirts must be tucked inside, unless they are made to be worn over pants or skirts.

(g) Light jackets, vests, shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts, and cardigans are permitted as items that may be worn over the uniform top. They must be tan, navy blue, black, or one of the additional colors approved by the school principal.

(h) No denim material may be worn as uniform clothing.

(i) All uniform clothing must be plain without any manufacturer's logos, brand names, pictures, or insignias visible on the clothing, unless approved by the school principal in accordance with Administrative Policy 9.08, Advertising in the Schools.

(j) Shoes with rollers or wheels are prohibited. Athletic shoes, sandals with straps on the heel, and boots are permitted.

(k) Heavy coats, heavy jackets, and raincoats are not approved uniform items and are not to be worn during the school day, unless permitted by the principal for special circumstances.

(l) Students may wear the uniforms of nationally-recognized student organizations at their schools on days specified by the organization and approved by the school principal.

### **(2) IMPLEMENTATION**

(a) Upon adoption of the uniform policy, and annually thereafter, the principal shall send a notice to the parents or guardians of students at least three months before the implementation of the policy each school year. The notice shall inform the student's parent or guardian of the following:

1. that a uniform policy has been implemented at the student's school;
2. that a parent or guardian of a student may exempt the student from complying with the policy by filing a written exemption form with the principal;
3. that no student shall be penalized academically or otherwise discriminated against because the student's parent or guardian has chosen to exempt the student from complying with the policy;
4. where uniforms can be purchased and the names of local discount merchants offering the most inexpensive uniforms;

5. the person within the school whom the parent or guardian may contact to request financial assistance in the purchase of a uniform.

(b) The principal shall work with MPS Procurement Services and the Department of Business, Community and Family Partnerships to identify the most inexpensive uniform components and shall notify parents as to where such uniforms may be purchased.

(c) The school shall solicit donations from community businesses and agencies to be used to assist economically disadvantaged students to purchase the uniforms.

### **(3) COMPLIANCE**

(a) Uniforms are to be worn during the regularly scheduled school day. They are not required to be worn at school-based events that occur after the regularly scheduled school days.

(b) Students who transfer to MPS after the third Friday in September for the reason of change of residence, who are new to MPS, who returning to MPS, who opting-out of charter, or who are returning from court-ordered facilities shall be provided a 30-day grace period in which to obtain their uniforms.

(c) The school and its staff shall ensure that no student is penalized academically or otherwise discriminated against because the student's parent or guardian has chosen to exempt the student from complying with the uniform policy. Likewise, violation of the school uniform policy shall not affect a student's academic or conduct grade or participation in extra-curricular activities.

(d) Written complaints from a parent or guardian about the school-uniform policy and the school dress code shall be reported to the principal or a designee.

### **(4) OPTING OUT OF THE UNIFORM POLICY**

(a) Permission for a school to opt-out of the uniform policy shall be granted as follows:

1. The school shall support its request to opt out of the uniform policy by producing documentation detailing 66 percent of the school community's agreement among parents and the school governance council.

2. A written exemption letter shall be filed with the school's Regional Superintendent, stating the reasons for its decision by April 1 of the initial implementation year and every year thereafter by January 1. The Regional Superintendent must approve the request to opt out. The decision to opt out will not be put into effect until the following school year.

(b) Permission for an individual student to opt out of the uniform policy shall be granted if a parent or guardian of the student enrolled in the school files a written exemption form with the school's principal.

(c) The Department of Specialized Services may decide to exempt any student from a school's uniform policy due to a student's exceptionality. This determination will be made upon the approval of the school's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.

### **(5) OTHER DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS**

(a) Rules concerning student dress may be established by individual schools only when they relate to a specific educational, health, or safety purpose. Students shall not be excluded from regular instruction because of their appearance if style, fashion, or taste is the sole criterion for such exclusion.

(b) While the school administration may require students participating in physical education classes to wear certain types of clothing such as sneakers, white socks, shorts, and tee shirts, they may not prescribe a specific brand which students must buy. Schools also may prohibit articles of clothing that cause excessive maintenance problems, such as cleats on boots, shoes that scratch floors, trousers with metal inserts that scratch furniture, etc.

(c) Additionally, existing laws and school regulations require the wearing of protective clothing, eye shields, or other dress in certain situations for the health or safety of students. For example, a hairnet

or cap may be required where long hair may pose a health or safety threat near open flames or moving machinery or in food classes. Each school shall make provisions for notifying students of these rules.

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