

In December 2019, the Oak Park School District Board of Education adopted new policies. Board of Education policies are guidelines adopted by the Board of Education under which our school district operates.

Board Policy 2006 - Behavior on Student Appearance states: Students' dress and grooming must not disrupt the educational process, interfere with the maintenance of a positive teaching/learning climate, or compromise reasonable standards of health, safety, and decency.

Throughout a series of meetings with students, administrators and district-wide attendance committee members, concerns were expressed about our previous standardized dress code (2-3 color approved pants/shirts) stifling the freedom of expression, inconsistently enforced, contributing to unnecessary conflicts among students and staff and a contributing factor to student absenteeism. Additionally, there is research that supports dress codes contribute to inequities among students.

Thank you to all of the students, families and staff who responded to the dress code survey. The survey closed on August 1, 2021. Over 82% of all respondents indicated that they are "in favor of students wearing what they choose to school as long as it is not offensive or inappropriate". As a result, **we have decided to pilot the dress code guidelines below for the 2021-2022 school year for students in PK-12 grade.** If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's building principal or assistant principal. Please see the Oak Park School Dress Code Guidelines below. Again, thank you! We are looking forward to a great school year!

### **Oak Park Schools 2021-2022 Student Dress Code Pilot**

The **Oak Park Schools** Board of Education Policy 2006 states, students' dress and grooming must not disrupt the educational process, interfere with the maintenance of a positive teaching and learning climate, or compromise reasonable standards of health, safety, and decency.

The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s). The District is responsible for ensuring that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student.

Further, **dress code enforcement and/or classmates must not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group** based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size. Any restrictions to the way a student dresses must be necessary to support the overall educational goals of the school and explained within these dress code guidelines.

#### **1. Basic Principle: Specific body parts must be covered for all students at all times.**

Clothes must be worn in a way such that genitals, buttocks, breasts, and navel are fully covered with opaque fabric. **All items listed in the "must wear" and "may wear" categories below must meet this basic principle.**

#### **2. Students Must Wear\*, while following the basic principle of Section 1 above:**

- A **Shirt** (with fabric in the front, back, and on the sides under the arms), **AND**

- **Pants/jeans or the equivalent** (for example, a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress or shorts) **that cover at least one-third of the student's legs, AND**
- **Shoes.**

*\*Courses that include attire as part of the curriculum (for example, professionalism, public speaking, and job readiness) may include assignment-specific dress, but should not focus on covering bodies in a particular way or promoting culturally-specific attire. Activity-specific shoe requirements are permitted (for example, athletic shoes for PE).*

### **3. Students May Wear, as long as these items do not violate Section 1 above:**

- Hats must allow the face to be visible to staff, and not interfere with the line of sight of any student or staff.
- Religious headwear
- Hoodie sweatshirts (whole face must be exposed)
- Fitted pants, including opaque leggings, yoga pants and “skinny jeans”
- Pajamas
- School/District Spirit Wear
- Ripped jeans, (rips must be below the knee only and not expose underwear or buttocks)
- Athletic attire
- Visible waistbands on undergarments or visible straps on undergarments worn under other clothing (as long as this is done in a way that does not violate Section 1 above).

### **4. Students Cannot Wear:**

- Violent language or images of weapons.
- Images or language depicting drugs, alcohol or vaping (or any illegal item or activity).
- Hate speech, profanity, pornography.
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups.
- Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments (visible waistbands and visible straps are allowed).
- Ripped jeans (above the knee)
- Tank tops, including spaghetti straps; halter tops
- Swimsuits
- Accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon.
- Any item that obscures the face or ears (except as a religious observance).

### **5. Dress Code Enforcement**

To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently using the requirements below. School administration and staff shall not have discretion to vary the requirements in ways that lead to discriminatory enforcement.

- Students will only be removed from spaces, hallways, or classrooms as a result of a dress code violation **as outlined in Sections 1 and 4 above.** Students in violation of Section 1 and/or 4 will be provided three (3) options to be dressed more to code during the school day:

- Students will be asked to put on their own alternative clothing, if already available at school, to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day. This clothing will not contribute to shaming or embarrassment.
  - Students will be provided with temporary school clothing to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day.
  - If necessary, students' parents may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.
- No student should be affected by dress code enforcement because of racial identity, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity.
  - Students should not be shamed or required to display their body in front of others (students, parents, or staff) in school. "Shaming" includes, but is not limited to:
    - kneeling or bending over to check attire fit;
    - asking students to account for their attire in the classroom or in hallways in front of others;
    - calling out students in spaces, in hallways, or in classrooms about perceived dress code violations in front of others; in particular, directing students to correct sagged pants that do not expose the entire undergarment, or confronting students about visible bra straps, since visible waistbands and straps on undergarments are permitted; and,
    - accusing students of "distracting" other students with their clothing.

These dress code guidelines shall apply to regular school days and summer school days, as well as any school-related events and activities, such as graduation ceremonies, dances and prom.

**If a student needs District-approved clothing, please contact a trusted adult at your school and arrangements will be made to assist with providing gently used clothing and/or laundering.** If students or families have any questions, please contact your school principal or assistant principal.