

<b>POLICY</b>	<b>BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND</b>
<b>DRESS CODE FOR STUDENTS</b>	<b>SECTION 439</b>
<b>439.1 Overview</b> <b>439.2 Dress Code</b> <b>439.3 Voluntary Uniform</b> <b>439.4 Mandatory Uniform</b>	<b>Adopted:</b> <b>12/4/96</b> <b>Amended:</b> <b>10/13/04</b>

### **439.1 Overview**

School climate is an integral part of education. Its importance to the educational process was highlighted in our adoption of the effective schools research as well as in our establishment of the board's second-generation goals. Student appearance is a part of school climate, and can help us achieve our goals in numerous ways. Our student attire policy is intended to create a positive environment for education, contribute to the learning and practice of the board's established core values, help students concentrate on school work, reduce discipline problems, and improve school order and safety. To this end, the policy includes a systemwide dress code and two options for a school-based student uniform program.

While the board is responsible for creating a supportive learning environment, we also appreciate the understandable interest students and parents have in matters of student dress. In developing this policy, the board has considered parents' and students' views as well as the recommendations of a community-based committee. We endorse the community consensus gathered from that input that students have a responsibility to dress and maintain their appearance in a manner that is safe, healthy, and non-disruptive to the educational process or school procedures.

### **439.2 Dress Code Policy**

Schools are strongly encouraged to adopt school specific dress policies and procedures in order to establish appropriate learning environments that reinforce the school system's mission while respecting students' first amendment rights. The minimum acceptable standards for student dress in the school system are:

- A. Male and female students are restricted from wearing clothing that is unduly revealing (e.g. cut low at the neck or under the arms, exposes bare midriff, pants worn below the hips exposing the student's underwear or skin).
- B. State regulations require the wearing of shoes in public places at all times.
- C. Students are expected to follow all school rules governing safety in specialized programs that may require the wearing of protective clothing, safety glasses, proper foot protection, or other similar requirements.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND  
POLICY**

- D. Students are prohibited from wearing clothing or items that promote illegal or violent conduct such as unlawful use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or weapons.
- E. Students are prohibited from wearing clothing or items that are obscene, libelous or feature sexually offensive or vulgar words, pictures, phrases, drawings, etc.
- F. Students are prohibited from wearing clothing or items containing derogatory expressions or language regarding a person's race, color, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability that could substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities are prohibited.
- G. Students are prohibited from wearing specific gang-related attire, hats, clothing that may conceal weapons or other illegal items such as drugs (outerwear jackets, etc.), and items that may be used as weapons (metal belts, chains attached to wallets/keys, etc.). Students may be required to keep these items in a locker or other clothing storage areas during the school day. Individual teachers, with the prior approval of the principal, shall have the specific authority to make additional modifications to further teaching and learning in their classrooms.
- H. Principals may grant exceptions to the dress code for disabilities or sincerely held religious beliefs if such accommodations are reasonable and do not pose a hardship for the school.
- I. Principals have authority to impose stricter dress code requirements to address specific concerns at his/her school if necessary to provide a safe and orderly environment.

**439.3 Voluntary Uniform Policy**

A school may adopt a voluntary uniform policy, without further approval from the board of education, in accordance with the following provisions:

- A. The school improvement team has determined there is sufficient stakeholder agreement with the proposed school uniform policy. Stakeholders include staff, parents, and students.
- B. The uniforms comply in all respects with section 439.2 of this policy concerning appropriate attire.
- C. The wearing of uniforms is not mandatory.
- D. Students will not be disciplined nor otherwise discriminated against for failing to wear uniforms.
- E. At least one free uniform is provided to any student when the family is unable to pay.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND  
POLICY**

- F. Nothing in this section denies parents the exclusive right to determine whether their children will wear school uniforms.
- G. The school participates as requested in any district evaluation of the school uniform program.

**439.4 Mandatory Uniform Policy**

A school may adopt a mandatory uniform policy, without further approval from the board of education, in accordance with the following provisions:

- A. The school improvement team has determined there is sufficient stakeholder agreement with the proposed school uniform policy. Stakeholders include staff, parents, and students.
- B. The school-selected uniforms comply in all respects with section 439.2 of this policy concerning appropriate attire.
- C. The school makes provisions for those students who, by reason of financial hardship, cannot comply with the mandatory uniform policy.
- D. 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. The wearing of a school uniform violates a student's sincerely held religious belief.
  - 3. A student's parent(s) or guardian has secured an exemption from the mandatory uniform policy by following the procedures set forth in section 439.4 E.
- E. Parents or guardians are permitted to exempt their children from the mandatory uniform program by the following procedure:
  - 1. A request is made by mail or in person by the parent or guardian for an application for exemption from the uniform program ("application"). The parent(s) or guardian may obtain an application at the student's school site.
  - 2. The application is completed in full and submitted to the school principal.
  - 3. The school principal or other designated administrator meets with the parents to discuss the uniform policy and the nature of the objections to the policy. The purposes of this meeting include:

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND  
POLICY**

- a. Ensuring that the parent(s) or guardian understand the reasons for and goals of the uniform policy.
  - b. Verifying the accuracy of the information on the application.
  - c. Preventing fraud or misrepresentation.
4. For the purposes of consistent administration and evaluation of the uniform policy, the parent(s) or guardian must meet with a designated district administrator to discuss the nature of their objection to the policy.
- F. The school, having duly instituted a mandatory uniform policy, implements compliance measures as indicated below:
1. Each school shall develop incentives and positive reinforcement measures to encourage full compliance with the uniform policy. Each school should strive to achieve full compliance through the use of incentives and positive reinforcement measures, and should resort to disciplinary action only when positive measures fail to ensure compliance. In addition, the school shall communicate with parents so that expectations, rationale, and benefits are fully understood by the student and his or her family.
  2. If necessary, 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 he/she is entitled, no student shall be suspended from class or from school, expelled from school, or receive a lowered academic grade as a result of not complying with the policy. Disciplinary action should be initiated only after all other means to secure support and cooperation as mentioned above have not succeeded.
  3. Prior to initiating any disciplinary action against a student not complying with the policy, a school administrator or counselor should hold a conference with the parent(s) or guardian to solicit cooperation and support.
- G. The school participates as requested in any district evaluation of the mandatory school uniform program.

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND  
POLICY

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM THE UNIFORM PROGRAM

School attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Parent Request

A. I have reviewed the school's mandatory uniform policy. Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

B. I am requesting that my child be exempted from the mandatory uniform policy for the following reasons:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

II. School Review

A. Meeting with parent held on \_\_\_\_\_

B. School response \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Official Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date