

TO: Naperville 203 Board of Education
Dan Bridges, Superintendent

FROM: Chala Holland, Assistant Superintendent Administrative Services
Chuck Freundt, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education

RE: Naperville 203 Student Dress Code

DATE: June 6, 2022

Background

Board Policy 7:160 - Student Appearance governs the student dress code in Naperville 203. In addition to Board Policy 7:160, aspects of student appearance and dress are also referenced in Board Policy 7:190 - Student Behavior.

A team of building and district administrators formed a dress code working group to discuss student dress codes across all levels in our district (elementary, junior high, and high school). At the elementary level, the dress code is primarily addressed towards parents, since they are held responsible for managing dress for students attending our elementary schools. At the junior high school and high school levels, students are held responsible for adhering to the dress code. The junior high schools had dress codes that differed across schools and sometimes differed from the high school students in the feeder path that students would attend. The high schools also had differences in student dress codes. In some cases, the language of the dress code differed from the ways dress codes were being experienced and enforced within each school. To provide a consistent and coherent experience across our schools, the dress code working group met to create a Naperville 203 student dress code for all schools, spanning early childhood through twelfth grade.

The dress code working group reviewed current dress codes within student handbooks across the district, reviewed and discussed Board Policy 7:160 and Board Policy 7:190, reviewed the district's mission, vision, comprehensive equity plan and the group discussed some of the primary needs and concerns experienced across levels. The group reviewed and discussed examples of dress codes from various districts, locally and across the country, read and discussed articles about the impact of dress codes across districts and amongst students, and also reviewed and discussed articles regarding various inequities fostered through dress codes and the disproportionate impact that occurs across student groups. The working group engaged in a lot of rich discussion, which resulted in creating a revised draft of a district-wide student dress code for all students in Naperville 203.

Members of the working group gathered feedback regarding the dress code draft by hosting focus group sessions for representative groups of stakeholders across the district. There were 57 administrators, 66 staff members, 116 students, and 75 parents who were engaged through focus groups. Following the focus group sessions, the working group reconvened to discuss feedback from each focus group session and engaged in additional revisions to the dress code draft.

In addition to drafting the dress code, the working group spent a significant amount of time discussing and gathering feedback from stakeholders regarding the most effective ways to create opportunities for stakeholders to learn about the dress code through dialogue and meaningful discussion.

Learning Opportunities

Crafting a district-wide dress code was no easy task. Determining the appropriateness, accessibility, and accuracy of language that encompasses extensive possibilities for student dress led to a realization that a dress code could never capture every single circumstance or dress choice that may arise. The working group also realized that the dress code is only as effective as the ways in which it is understood, how it is applied, and how the impact is monitored. The version of the dress code that will be implemented for the 2022-2023 school-year represents the wording group's best attempt to consider the range of experiences, needs, and perspectives that exist across stakeholder groups, while keeping the student experience at the forefront of this matter.

Building and district leaders will educate stakeholders in the following ways:

Students

- Homeroom discussions/activities
- Class/group assemblies
- Small group discussions and dress code learning activities

Staff

- District Institute Days
- Department meetings
- Staff meetings
- Leadership meetings (building and district)

Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

- Parent/family committees and group meetings
- Open House
- Principal/parent meetings and coffees

Next steps

The Naperville 203 Student Dress Code will be included in all school (EC-12) handbooks moving forward. Handbooks will be printed over the summer months. In addition to the learning opportunities mentioned above, the dress code working group will continue to meet, recognizing that we will learn more from the implementation of the dress code and will need to remain responsive to the needs that arise and the feedback received. The dress code working committee will meet at the end of the first semester and second semester during the 2022-2023 school-year and will continue to meet annually to discuss and review the dress code, its relevance, implementation, and impact.

Naperville 203 Student Dress Code

The student dress code in Naperville 203 is derived from Board Policy 7:160 - Student Appearance: *Students' appearance, including dress and personal hygiene, must not disrupt the educational process, interfere with the maintenance of a positive teaching/learning climate, or compromise reasonable standards of health and safety.*

Intended Purpose: To promote a positive learning environment in schools consistent with the values of Naperville 203 and to ensure a safe and inclusive learning and working environment for all students, staff and the community, regardless of their race, age, ability, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, socio-economic circumstances, or body type/size.

Guidelines for the instructional day: An individual's dress, personal appearance, cleanliness, as well as behavior, demonstrate sensitivity to and respect for the learning community.

- Students must wear tops, bottoms, and shoes.
- Clothes must be worn in a way that genitals, buttocks, and nipples are fully covered with opaque (non-transparent) material.
- All undergarments must be covered by outer attire (visible straps are allowed).
- Caps, hats, or head coverings may be worn in the building during the school day provided they do not compromise the ability to identify a student, compromise academic integrity, or cause a disruption to the learning environment.
- Attire or accessories that directly, by innuendo, or look-alike promote alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography, profanity, violence, gangs, and weapons may not be worn at school.
- Students cannot wear anything that includes hate speech, images, or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment for others, including any protected class or marginalized group. Hate speech includes any form of expression through which speakers vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against a group or a class of persons on the basis of race, religion, skin color, sexual identity, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, immigrant status, or national origin (adapted from the American Library Association).

***These guidelines may be adapted by building/district administrators for special events or other school sponsored activities. Student athletic and activity apparel will be defined by safety and competitive performance standards. All dress code adaptations must follow Board Policy 7:160 - Student Appearance.**