

Approved by the Board of Education: November 10, 2008

BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

1. Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the Bridgeport Board of Education to regulate the attire of students during the school day. All students in grades PK-8 beginning with the 2009-2010 school year for the Bridgeport Public schools will wear mandatory uniforms. School uniforms policies can promote school safety, improve discipline, and enhance the learning environment.

2a. Parental Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parent/legal guardian to ensure that their child/children dress in compliance with the requirements of this policy.

2b. Staff Responsibility

School personnel, including substitutes, should serve as role models for proper attire in the educational setting. School personnel should ensure that all students adhere to the School Uniform Policy.

3. Mandatory School Uniform for Bridgeport School Students, Grades PK-8

- **PANTS** – Navy or Tan dress or [Dockers] trouser style pants must be worn with a belt at the waist. Jeans are prohibited.
- **SKIRTS, JUMPERS OR SKORTS** – Navy or Tan must be worn and must be knee level or longer. Blouse or polo shirts must be worn under the jumper. Jeans are prohibited.
- **SHORTS** – Navy or Tan knee length dress or [Dockers] trouser style shorts. Shorts must be worn with a belt at the waist. Jeans are prohibited.
- **SHIRTS** – White plain collar polo shirt, dress shirt, long or short sleeve. Two additional colors may be selected by each school's leadership team. Shirts must be tucked into pants. Individual schools will choose their colors before end of school term 2008-2009. Every school has an option to create a school logo, if desired. Logos must be reviewed by the Superintendent or his\her designee and recommended for approval by the Board of Education. Schools that already have a logo must send it to the Superintendent or his\her designee for review and documentation.

• **SWEATSHIRT OR SWEATERS CAN BE PULLOVER OR ZIPPERED –**

Only [uniform] pullover or cardigan sweaters in the solid colors of Navy or Tan (no patterns) without hoods or decorations or wording will be allowed. Individual schools may choose an additional authorized color for sweaters, vest and blazers.

• **SHOES OR SNEAKERS** – Shoes are strongly recommended. In addition to shoes, white and black sneakers are permitted. Laces on shoes or sneakers must be tied.

• **PHYSICAL EDUCATION DAY ATTIRE-** Students may wear sweats to school on scheduled physical education day only. School approved t-shirts and shorts permitted. Physical Education attire colors will be chosen by individual schools SLT.

**** Refer to the Bridgeport Public Schools Code of Discipline Section for further dress code restrictions which can be obtained from the Principal's office.***

4. Compliance.

All students are required to adhere to the required attire. School administrators and teachers are encouraged to use positive reinforcement to obtain compliance with school attire requirements. However, when a student fails to comply with the school attire policy, discipline is appropriate. The following discipline procedures will apply:

- (1) First Offense: Verbal counseling and notification to parent/legal guardian.
- (2) Second Offense: Written warning and notification to parent/legal guardian.
- (3) Third Offense: Written warning and a mandatory meeting between the Principal and the parent/legal guardian to explain School Attire Policy and obtain compliance.
- (4) Fourth and Subsequent Offenses: At the principal's discretion, attendance at special programs and activities may be forfeited or withheld until the student comes to school in uniform. If the foregoing disciplinary measures do not achieve compliance with the School Attire Policy, the principal may impose stronger discipline.
- (5) The principal of each school will provide standardized letters to be utilized for student warnings and notifications to parent/legal guardian.

- (6) There will be a one-time grace period of 21 days at the start of the 2009-2010 school year, during which current enrolled students will not be disciplined for failing to wear the mandatory uniform clothing. Any student transferring into the Bridgeport School District from another school district during the course of a school year will also be allowed the same grace period. During this grace period, students will be encouraged to obtain and wear clothing that meets the uniform requirements. After the completion of this one-time grace period, the foregoing disciplinary procedures will go into effect to address any continuing non-compliance.

5. Clothing and Items Prohibited for All Grades, PK-8

Please refer to the Bridgeport Public Schools Code of Discipline handbook, Dress Code section – pages 19 and 20.

6. Exceptions for Designated Days or Events

Each school principal may designate specific days or events during which deviations from the approved uniform will be permitted.

7. Religious and Health Accommodations

When the bona fide religious beliefs or health needs of a student conflict with the school attire policy, the schools will provide reasonable accommodation. The parent/legal guardian of any student desiring uniform policy exceptions will notify their school principal in writing of the requested accommodation and the factual basis for the request. Approved coverings worn as part of a student's bona fide religious practices or beliefs will not be prohibited under this policy. A medical documentation will be required for health accommodations. The procedures for this process are set forth in paragraph 8, below.

8. Procedures for Exemption

Parent/legal guardian may request an exemption from a mandatory school uniform program for medical or religious reasons. A request for an exemption must be made within ten (10) operational days of the beginning of the school year or within ten (10) operational days of being enrolled in any given school for the first time (note: The term, "operational days", is defined as days when school is in session.). Medical exemption requests must be signed by a medical doctor. See your school principal for further information on exceptions. A written request for an exemption must be submitted to the school principal using the Application for Exemption Form that can be obtained from the school.

The school principal or his/her designee must meet with the parent/legal guardian within five (5) school days. The principal will discuss the Bridgeport School Uniform policy and verify the accuracy of the information on the Exemption form. The parent/legal guardian will be

notified in writing of the outcome of the conference within three (3) school days. A copy of said notice that the application has been granted or denied shall be attached to the application. The application shall also be initialed by the Principal and a copy of the initialed application and the notice sent to the parent/legal guardian shall be forwarded to the Superintendent or his/her designee.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will affirm or deny the principal's decision. If the parent/legal guardian does not agree with the decision, they have a right to appeal to the Board of Policy committee within five (5) school days. Consideration will be reviewed by case by case basis.

9. Clothing Assistance

It is the policy of the Board of Education that no student will be denied an education due to bona fide financial inability to obtain clothing that complies with the Board's Attire Policy. Any student, for whom compliance with the school attire policy poses a bona fide financial burden, may submit a written request for clothing assistance to their school principal specifying the clothing needed together with a statement of financial need. The Superintendent will provide principals with standardized forms to be completed by parent/legal guardian seeking clothing assistance. School principals or their designees will assist families in financial need to obtain clothing that complies with the school attire policy. In meeting requests for assistance, principals or their designees will consider community resources such as clothing or financial donations from corporations, members of the community, local businesses, parent organizations, and charitable organizations; clothing discounts from local merchants; and providing additional time for a student to obtain clothing that complies with the School Attire Policy.

Legal Reference: This policy is authorized by Section 10-221f of the General Statutes of Connecticut, which provides in salient part that: "[a] local or regional board of education may specify a school uniform for students under its jurisdiction."

Approved by District PAC Executive Board on October 21, 2008.