



Superintendent's Circular

School Year 2011-2012

NUMBER:
SUP-18

DATE:
September 1, 2011

SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

BACKGROUND

In recent years, school systems across the country and in Massachusetts have adopted school uniform policies. Here in Boston, a number of elementary schools and middle schools have adopted uniform policies. Universally, support for a school uniform policy has been based on the belief that it improves the learning environment, minimizes disruption, reduces tension, promotes self-esteem and improved student behavior and is cost effective for parents.

At the meeting of January 15, 1997, the Boston School Committee adopted the school uniform policy outlined in this circular. The policy requires all schools at all levels to adopt one of three options after assuring broad-based involvement and support of the option to be implemented by all constituencies of the school community, including parents, teachers and, at the high school level, students. The school policy should be determined in the spring of each school year in order to provide for adequate notice to parents and for the appropriate revision of student handbooks and school-based rules.

POLICY STATEMENT

All elementary and secondary schools in the Boston Public Schools shall establish a school-site school uniform policy in accordance with the parameters set forth herein.

The policy options each school shall consider and from which they must select one are as follows:

- **A Voluntary School Uniform Policy:** This policy is one in which the school prescribes a standard student uniform but allows the parent to make the decision concerning their child's participation.
- **A Mandatory School Uniform Policy:** This policy is one in which the school prescribes a standard student uniform and requires all students to participate unless the parent seeks an exemption from the policy.
- **A No Uniform Policy:** This policy provides freedom to the student and parent in the selection of dress, provided it complies with the "reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness" requirement of state law (G.L. c71, §83) and with established school dress codes.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

Policy Adoption

1. All School-Site Councils shall implement this policy after presenting the three options noted herein to all constituencies of the school community and canvassing parents and staff to determine their opinions and/or choices. At the high school level, students shall also be canvassed to determine their preference.
2. The policy proposal being considered shall be posted and circulated to all school constituencies before it is discussed at a regular School-Site Council meeting.

3. The policy shall be voted on at the first regularly scheduled meeting after it has been proposed and the options discussed. This discussion shall include the results of the parent, staff and student sampling. An opportunity for public comment shall be provided at the School-Site Council meeting before the vote is taken.

Dissemination of the Policy Decision

It shall be the responsibility of the school-site administration to circulate the School-Site Council's decision regarding the policy. In addition, the school's uniform policy statement and school-based guidelines designed to implement the policy should be included in the School-Based Rules document distributed to parents and students each year.

If the decision has been made to adopt either a "voluntary" policy or a "mandatory" policy, information on the uniforms shall be disseminated to all parents in the language of the home. That information packet shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Information on the policy
- Options on articles of clothing, colors, etc.
- How to order uniforms, including the names and addresses of local vendors
- Costs and, if available, financial assistance programs
- Enforcement guidelines (if mandatory)
- Procedures for exemption from the policy (if mandatory)

COMMENCEMENT OF THE POLICY

A school-site student uniform policy shall be effective at the start of the school year following its adoption by the School-Site Council.

COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES

1. No student shall be subject to internal detention, suspension or expulsion from school and/or be penalized academically as a result of not complying with the school-site policy.
2. Each school shall develop incentives and positive reinforcement measures to encourage full participation and compliance with the school-site policy.
3. No student shall be considered in violation of a "mandatory" school-site uniform policy if the parent/guardian secures an exemption for the student from the building administrator for any one of the following reasons:
 - Creates financial hardship
 - Violates religious belief
 - Conflicts with the wearing of a nationally recognized youth organization uniform (e.g. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts) on meeting days, during Scout Week, etc.
 - Other personal reasons cited by the parent

EVALUATION

1. All schools shall evaluate the effectiveness of their policy each year.
2. School-Site Councils shall consider either continuation of their uniform policy or a change to a different uniform policy on or before the second Friday of May each year. Any change should be implemented at the start of the next school year. The School-Based Rules and Student Handbook should reflect the policy change.

Summary of significant dates and deadlines:

Date	Activity
June 1	Deadline for schools to submit their Uniform Policy to their Operational Leader
June 8	Deadline for Operational Leaders to submit a summary of their schools' Uniform Policy

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Carol R. Johnson, Superintendent

Boston Public Schools

Uniform Policy

School Committee policy requires that, in the spring of each year, each School-Site Council consider which of the three school uniform policy options will be implemented in the following school year. The purpose of this reporting form is to indicate which option your school has selected for School Year 2011-2012:

School Name: _____

Please (✓) the appropriate Policy for your school and return to your Operational Leader on or before Friday, June 1, 2012. The Operational Leader will submit a summary of their schools the Superintendent's Office on or before Friday, June 8, 2012.

Voluntary Uniform Policy

This policy is one in which the school prescribes a standard student uniform but allows the parent to make the decision concerning their child's participation.

Mandatory School Uniform Policy

This policy is one in which the school prescribes a standard student uniform and requires all students to participate unless the parent seeks an exception from the policy.

No Uniform Policy

This policy provides freedom to the student and parent in the selection of dress, provided it complies with the "reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness" requirement of state law (G.L. c71, §83), and with established school dress codes.

If your school has established either a "voluntary" or a "mandatory" uniform policy for next school year, please complete the following:

A. Description of Uniform (please include color)

Boys Uniform _____

Girls Uniform _____

B. Name (and address) of Uniform Provider

C. Approximate Cost

Thank you for your cooperation

Principal / Headmaster Signature: _____ Date: _____