



**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY BULLETIN**

TITLE: Student Dress Codes/Uniforms

NUMBER: BUL-2549.1

ISSUER: Jim Morris, Chief Operating Officer
Office of the Chief Operating Officer

DATE: December 15, 2009

ROUTING
Local District
Superintendents
Directors, School Services
Operations Coordinators
School Site Administrators

MAJOR CHANGES: This bulletin updates BUL-2549 to provide additional guidance regarding gender-neutral dress guidelines and provide translated parent letters.

BACKGROUND: The Los Angeles Unified School District believes that appropriate student dress contributes to a productive learning environment. This bulletin addresses student dress codes/uniforms and provides schools with guidelines and requirements for the development of local site policy consistent with District policy.

Courts have generally interpreted a student’s choice of attire as a form of expression protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution. In general, the only restrictions that may be placed on attire are in cases where it disrupts the educational program or is necessary for the health and safety of the school environment. State law provides that a school district governing board may adopt a reasonable dress code policy, and/or permit school-wide uniform policies if the policy is necessary for the health and safety of the school environment. All dress codes must be gender-neutral. Students may not be disciplined or restricted from wearing attire that may be traditionally associated with the other sex.

The School Uniform Policy shall be adopted as a component of the Safe School Plan.

GUIDELINES: To maintain an effective learning environment and to keep the focus of the classroom on learning, schools, with input from the administration faculty, school site staff, parents/guardians, and students where appropriate, are authorized to implement the District’s student dress code and/or establish a school student uniform policy consistent with the bulleting. The following guidelines apply.

I. STUDENT DRESS CODES

A. A student dress code sets forth general parameters and prohibitions for student attire.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

- B. Prior to implementing a student dress code, the school must obtain the approval of the Local District Superintendent/designee. Restrictions on student dress may be imposed under the following guidelines, per State law and District policy:
1. The student dress code components must be necessary for the health and safety of the school environment.
 2. The student dress code may restrict wearing “gang-related apparel” with the following conditions:
 - a. The school has identified the necessity for the restriction(s); and
 - b. The school provides a reasonable description of the restricted apparel
 3. All students shall be required to show proper attention to personal cleanliness, health, neatness, safety, and suitability of clothing and appearance for school activities. In every case, the dress and grooming of the student shall not:
 - a. Cause actual distraction from or disturbance in any school activity or actually interfere with the participation of a student in any school activity;
 - b. Create a hazard to the safety of him/herself or others;
 - c. Create a health hazard.
 4. Clothing, jewelry, and personal items, such as backpacks and book bags, with language or images that are vulgar, sexually suggestive, discriminatory, obscene, libelous, contain threats, or that promote illegal or violent content such as the unlawful use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia, are prohibited.
 5. Consistent with these guidelines, hair, sideburns, mustaches, and beards may be worn at any length or style, and clothing may be of any fashion, style or design, as determined by the student and his/her parents/guardians.
 6. Each school shall allow students to wear sun-protective clothing, including but not limited to hats, for outdoor use during the school day. However, consistent with the student dress code, schools may determine the type and style of approved sun-protective clothing for student use outdoors.

Procedures for Parent Notification of Student Dress Codes:

1. The Parent/Student Handbook shall be provided to each student



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

at the beginning of the school year and to any student upon enrollment at any point after the beginning of the school year.

2. The school may separately notify parents/guardians of the school's student dress code (see Attachment B). This notification should include the following information:
 - a. A copy of the school's student dress code;
 - b. Designated contacts should the family need economic assistance to comply with the student dress code;
 - c. Any consequences for failure to follow the student dress code; and
 - d. The complaint procedure, and contact person(s) at the school, should there be any complaints.
3. Students may not be disciplined or removed from class as a consequence for wearing "inappropriate" attire. However, a student may briefly leave the classroom to change clothes. The school should notify parents/guardians of the school's response to student violations of the student dress code. Typical consequences would include a parent contact or conference and the directive to cover the non-complying clothing or change clothes. If the student is wearing clothing that is a safety hazard and not otherwise exempted (please see Section III B 2 b, below) the school may direct the student to remove or replace that article of clothing.

II. SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICIES

- A. A school uniform policy sets forth requirements for student attire. However, school uniform policies are voluntary. If a student's parent or guardian exercises the right to opt out of the school uniform policy, the student must follow the student dress code.
- B. Schools may establish a school uniform policy, consistent with the following criteria:
 1. The specific uniform selected shall be determined by the principal, certificate and classified employment representatives, parents/guardians, and students (if secondary) of the individual school. The Local School Leadership Site Council may fulfill this function. The school uniform policy must specify:
 - a. Types and colors of uniform;
 - b. Requirements for jackets/outer garments;



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

- c. Optional articles of attire, if any;
 - d. Clearly stated, appropriate consequences for failure to comply with the school uniform policy;
 - e. Procedures to provide uniforms to economically disadvantaged students at no cost;
 - f. Methods to facilitate recycling of uniforms within the school community;
 - g. Provision for allowing students to wear sun-protective clothing, including but not limited to hats, for outdoor use during the school day. However, consistent with the school uniform policy, schools may determine the type and style of approved sun-protective clothing for student use outdoors.
 - h. Procedures to allow for immediate enrollment of students, including students who are homeless or in the foster care system, even if the student does not have a school uniform at the time of enrollment (see item e, above).
 - i. Provision for opting out of the school uniform policy, including notification to all parents/guardians at least annually.
2. The uniform policy shall not be initially implemented without at least six months prior notice to parents/guardians.
 3. The school must have available resources to assist economically disadvantaged students to obtain the uniform at no cost.
 4. School uniform policies are voluntary. If a student's parent or guardian exercises the right to opt out of the school uniform policy, the student must follow the student dress code.

If the student's parents/guardians choose not to have the student comply with the school uniform policy, the student shall not be penalized academically, suspended or expelled from school, or otherwise discriminated against or denied attendance to school or participation in school activities.

- a. Parents/guardians choosing to opt out of the school uniform policy shall indicate such choice by submitting a written statement to the school, which shall be effective upon receipt. Attachment E includes a form schools may provide to parents/guardians who ask to opt out. Parents/guardians are not required to explain or justify their decision to opt out.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

5. Students who participate in a nationally recognized youth organization shall not be precluded from wearing the organization's uniform on days that the organization has a scheduled meeting.
6. The school uniform policy shall be adopted as a component of the school's safe school plan.

PROCEDURES FOR PARENT NOTIFICATION OF THE SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

Adequate notice of the school uniform policy is provided to all parents/guardians, students, and school staff. At minimum, a copy of the school uniform policy shall be given to each entering student at the time of enrollment, and to all students at the beginning of each school year.

Initial Establishment of a School Uniform Policy

- a. The Local School Leadership Site Council, in consultation with the School Safety Planning Committee, must approve the school uniform policy. The draft policy must first be shared with school staff, parents/guardians, and students (secondary) for input.
- b. The school must identify financial resources for students who are not able to comply with the school uniform policy due to financial hardship. The school must:
 - 1) Develop a procedure and criteria to identify families in need of financial assistance;
 - 2) Determine the form and type of financial assistance appropriate for the individual school community;
 - 3) Designate a specific staff member or school volunteer to assist those families in need of assistance; and
 - 4) Prepare a flyer describing in detail the uniform. The flyer shall state that in cases of severe financial hardship, parents may contact their child's school by phone, mail or in person to request assistance. The flyer should also contain the name and contact information of the school's designee who handles requests for assistance.
 - 5) Work with staff, the local school community and



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

- business partners to identify resources for assisting families.
- c. School uniform policies approved by Local School Site Councils shall be submitted for approval by the appropriate Local District Operations Coordinator.
 - d. The school uniform policy must make clear that no student shall be considered noncompliant with the policy in the following instances:
 - 1) When noncompliance derives from financial hardship.
 - 2) When a student wears a button, armband or other accouterment to exercise the right to freedom of expression as provided by Education Code 48907, unless the button, armband or other accouterment falls outside speech protected by First Amendment (see Part II A 4, above), or signifies or is related to gangs, gang membership or gang activity as provided by Education Code 35183.
 - 3) When a student wears the uniform of a nationally recognized youth organization on regular meeting days.
 - 4) When wearing a school uniform violates a student's sincerely held religious belief.
 - 5) When a student's parent or guardian has opted out of the school uniform policy by following the procedures set forth in Part B 2 e, below.
 - e. Following the approval process, which must include approval by the Local District Operations Coordinator, the school uniform policy shall not be implemented with less than six months' notice to parents/guardians of the policy. Notice includes providing a copy of the policy to parents/guardians, along with the anticipated start date of implementation. (See Attachment D). Notice of the school's uniform policy may also be included in school newsletters, parent meetings including advisory councils and PTA meetings, newsletters, telephonic notification, posters displayed at the school, and enrollment materials.

Implementation of Established School Uniform Policy

- a. The Parent/Student Handbook should be provided to each student at the beginning of the school year and



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

- to any student upon enrollment at any point after the beginning of the school year.
- b. The school must separately notify parents/guardians of the school's uniform policy at the same time the Parent/Student Handbook is distributed (see Attachment D). This notification should include the following information
 - 1) A copy of the school's uniform policy;
 - 2) Designated contacts should the family need financial assistance to comply with the school uniform policy;
 - 3) Any consequences for failure to follow the school uniform policy (please see Part B 1 d, above); and
 - 4) The complaint procedure, and contact person(s) at the school, should there be any complaints.
 - c. Financial assistance shall continue to be provided as described above,(Part B 1 b 1).
 - d. Notice of the school uniform policy should continue to be provided as described above (Part B 1 d).
 - e. Parents/guardians must be notified of their right to opt out of the school uniform policy (see Attachment D).
 - 1) At the parent's/guardian request, the school shall provide the parent/guardian with an opt out form (see Attachment E).
 - 2) The completed opt out is effective immediately upon receipt by the school.
 - 3) Upon receipt of the completed opt out form, the school should provide the opting out student with an identification card (see Attachment F).

If the school issues the opt out identification card, the school shall inform the student that this identification card should be carried, along with the student identification card, to school and to school activities and events. In case of loss of the opt out card, the school must establish a procedure for immediate replacement.
 - 4) The school should maintain a list of students who have opted out of the school uniform policy to ensure these students enjoy the same rights and privileges as all other students attending the school. (see Attachment G). The school must notify appropriate school staff of those students



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

who have opted out of the school uniform policy.

Physical Education Uniforms:

If a school chooses to adopt a school uniform policy for physical education classes only, the school must follow all provisions for school uniform policies noted above with regard to:

1. Notice to parents/guardians and students of the physical education uniform;
2. Provision of the physical education uniform at not cost to economically disadvantaged students; and
3. Notice to parents/guardians and students that no grade of a pupil participating in a physical education class may be adversely affected due to the fact that the pupil does not wear standardized physical education apparel where the failure to wear such apparel arises from circumstances beyond the student's control.
4. Notice to parents/guardians of the options for purchasing a physical education uniform, specifically noting that physical education uniforms need not be purchased through the school.

ATTACHMENTS A: Checklist for Implementing the Student Dress Code
B: Sample Letter to Parents/Guardians Regarding the Student Dress Code
C: Checklist for Establishing a School Uniform Policy
D: Sample Letter to Parents/Guardians Regarding the School Uniform Policy
E: Sample Parent/Guardian Opt Out Form for School Uniforms
F: Sample Opt Out Student Identification Cards
G: Sample Opt Out Roster

AUTHORITY: This is a policy of Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part C, Section 722; California Education Code sections 35183, 35183.5, 48853.5, 49066

RELATED Board Rule 2251
RESOURCES: District Bulletin No. 1292, "Attendance Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools."
District Bulletin No. 787, "Guidelines for School Enrollment of Students in Out-of-Home Care."
District Bulletin No. 1570, "Enrollment of Homeless Children and Youth in Schools."



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

ASSISTANCE: For assistance or further information please contact your Local District Operations Coordinator, the Office of School Operations at (213) 241-4133.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

ATTACHMENT A

CHECKLIST FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STUDENT DRESS CODE

- _____ The student dress code meets the requirements of the District, including:
 - _____ Components are necessary for the health and safety of the school environment.
 - _____ If prohibiting “gang-related apparel,” the school identified the necessity for the restriction(s) and provided a reasonable description of the restricted apparel.
 - _____ Prohibits dress and grooming of students that causes actual distraction from or disturbance in any school activity or actually interfere with the participation of a student in any school activity.
 - _____ Prohibits dress and grooming of students that creates a hazard to the safety of him/herself or others.
 - _____ Prohibits dress and grooming of students that creates a health hazard.
 - _____ Components respect the First Amendment rights of the school community.
 - _____ Allowing students to wear appropriate sun-protective clothing outdoors. (II A).
 - _____ The Parent/Student Handbook, containing information about dress codes, was distributed at the beginning of the school year and to any student upon enrollment (II B 1).
 - _____ The school provided copies of the student dress code to students/parents/guardians, including information about consequences (II B 2, 3).



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

ATTACHMENT B

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS REGARDING THE STUDENT DRESS CODE

[DATE]

Dear Parent/Guardians:

Welcome to _____ School. As part of the school orientation process, I would like to provide you with information about our Student Dress Code, a copy of which is enclosed. All students are expected to dress appropriately for the educational environment. We believe that appropriate student dress contributes to a productive learning environment, and we want to ensure the health and safety of our students.

As noted by Board policy, all students shall be required to show proper attention to personal cleanliness, health, neatness, safety, and suitability of clothing and appearance for school activities. In every case the dress and grooming of the student shall not:

- cause actual distraction from or disturbance in any school activity or actually interfere with the participation of a student in any school activity;
- create a hazard to the safety of him/herself or others; and/or
- create a health hazard.

Students are allowed to wear sun-protective clothing, including hats, for outdoor use during the school day. However, articles of sun-protective clothing that have been identified as “gang-related apparel” in our Student Dress Code are prohibited.

Please take a few moments to review the Student Dress Code with your child. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact _____ at (____) _____. We look forward to a productive school year.

Sincerely,

[NAME]
Principal, _____ School

Enclosure



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

ATTACHMENT C

CHECKLIST FOR ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

- _____ Selection of the school uniform involved all required stakeholders (III A 1).
- _____ The school uniform policy specifies the following:
 - _____ Types and colors of uniform;
 - _____ Requirements for jackets/outer garments;
 - _____ Optional articles of attire, if any;
 - _____ Appropriate consequences for failure to comply are clearly stated;
 - _____ Procedures to provide uniforms to economically disadvantaged students at no cost;
 - _____ Methods to facilitate recycling of uniforms within the school community;
- _____ Provision for allowing students to wear sun-protective clothing, including but not limited to hats, for outdoor use during the school day. However, consistent with the school uniform policy, schools may determine the type and style of approved sun-protective clothing for student use outdoors.
- _____ Provision for opting out of the school uniform policy, including notification to all parents/guardians at least annually.
- _____ Provision for immediate enrollment of students, including students who are homeless or in the foster care system, even if the student does not have a school uniform at the time of enrollment (III A 1).
- _____ Parents/guardians and students had a least six months' notice prior to initial implementation of the school uniform policy (III A 2).
- _____ The school has resources to assist economically disadvantaged students to obtain school uniforms at no cost to the students (III A 3; III B 1 b).
- _____ The Local School Site Council approved the school uniform policy—Date: __ (III B 1 c).
- _____ The Local District Operations Coordinator approved the school uniform policy Date: __ (III c).



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

ATTACHMENT C (continued)

CHCKLIST FOR ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

- _____ Parents/guardians and students were provided with a copy of the school uniform policy, including contacts for financial assistance, notice of the right to opt out and notice of consequences for noncompliance, (III B 1 e; III B 2 b).

- _____ The Parent/Student Handbook, containing information about student uniform policies, was distributed at the beginning of the school year and to any student upon enrollment (III B 2 a).



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

ATTACHMENT D

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS REGARDING THE SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

[DATE]

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to _____ School. As part of the school orientation process, I would like to provide you with information about our School Uniform Policy, a copy of which is enclosed.

[We have chosen to adopt this School Uniform Policy to help create a sense of community and encourage pride in our school. The policy was developed by school staff, parents, and _____ to support these goals, and students at our school are encouraged to participate in our School Uniform Policy.]

[Schools are expected to take measures to maintain a safe school environment, including keeping gang influence off of school campuses. School uniforms are one means of eliminating the fear of students wearing gang apparel, either purposefully or inadvertently, and also encouraging school spirit in a positive, constructive manner. Considering these benefits, our Local School Site Council approved our school's School Uniform Policy on [DATE]. Students at our school are encouraged to participate in our School Uniform Policy.]

Please take a few moments to review the School Uniform Policy with your child. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact _____ at (____) _____. If you are considering opting out of the School Uniform Code, please contact the school so we may facilitate your request. We look forward to a productive school year.

Sincerely,

[NAME]
Principal, _____ School

Enclosure



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

ATTACHMENT E

SAMPLE PARENT/GUARDIAN OPT OUT FORM FOR SCHOOL UNIFORMS

I have been informed of _____ School's School Uniform Policy. As the parent/guardian of _____ (please print name of child), I would like to opt out of the School Uniform policy for my child, effective immediately, for the current academic year. I have received a copy of the Student Dress Code and understand that my child must comply with the Student Dress Code. I also have been informed that at any time, I may inform the school that I would like my child to participate in the School Uniform Policy and may revoke this opt out at that time.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO THE SCHOOL.

I have been informed of _____ School's School Uniform Policy. As the parent/guardian of _____ (please print name of child), I would like to opt out of the School Uniform policy for my child, effective immediately, for the current academic year. I have received a copy of the Student Dress Code and understand that my child must comply with the Student Dress Code. I also have been informed that at any time, I may inform the school that I would like my child to participate in the School Uniform Policy and may revoke this opt out at that time.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO THE SCHOOL



**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY BULLETIN**

ATTACHMENT F

SAMPLE OPT OUT STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS

<p>SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY OPT OUT CARD</p> <p>Name of Student: _____</p> <p>Student ID Number: _____</p> <p>Name of School: _____</p> <p>School Representative Signature: _____</p>	<p>SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY OPT OUT CARD</p> <p>Name of Student: _____</p> <p>Student ID Number: _____</p> <p>Name of School: _____</p> <p>School Representative Signature: _____</p>
<p>Valid for the 20__-20__ School Year</p>	<p>Valid for the 20__-20__ School Year</p>
<p>SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY OPT OUT CARD</p> <p>Name of Student: _____</p> <p>Student ID Number: _____</p> <p>Name of School: _____</p> <p>School Representative Signature: _____</p>	<p>SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY OPT OUT CARD</p> <p>Name of Student: _____</p> <p>Student ID Number: _____</p> <p>Name of School: _____</p> <p>School Representative Signature: _____</p>
<p>Valid for the 20__-20__ School Year</p>	<p>Valid for the 20__-20__ School Year</p>
<p>SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY OPT OUT CARD</p> <p>Name of Student: _____</p> <p>Student ID Number: _____</p> <p>Name of School: _____</p> <p>School Representative Signature: _____</p>	<p>SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY OPT OUT CARD</p> <p>Name of Student: _____</p> <p>Student ID Number: _____</p> <p>Name of School: _____</p> <p>School Representative Signature: _____</p>
<p>Valid for the 20__-20__ School Year</p>	<p>Valid for the 20__-20__ School Year</p>
<p>SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY OPT OUT CARD</p> <p>Name of Student: _____</p> <p>Student ID Number: _____</p> <p>Name of School: _____</p> <p>School Representative Signature: _____</p>	<p>SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY OPT OUT CARD</p> <p>Name of Student: _____</p> <p>Student ID Number: _____</p> <p>Name of School: _____</p> <p>School Representative Signature: _____</p>
<p>Valid for the 20__-20__ School Year</p>	<p>Valid for the 20__-20__ School Year</p>



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

ATTACHMENT G

SAMPLE OPT OUT ROSTER

	Name	DOB	Grade	Homeroom/Teacher	Date Issued
1.					
2.					
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