



Regulation of the Chancellor

Category: **STUDENTS**

Number: **A-665**

Subject: **MANDATORY UNIFORM POLICY**

Issued: **12/4/98**

Summary of Changes

This regulation implements the Board of Education's mandatory uniform policy.

There are no changes in this regulation.



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ABSTRACT

This regulation implements the Board of Education's mandatory uniform policy adopted on March 18, 1998. It applies to students in grades pre-K through 8, except in schools designated as middle schools, intermediate schools, junior high schools and high schools.

The mandatory uniform policy is intended to promote a more effective learning climate; foster school unity and pride; improve student performance; foster self-esteem; eliminate label competition; simplify dressing and minimize costs to parents; teach children appropriate dress and decorum in their "work" place; and help to improve student conduct and discipline.

I. Definition of Uniform Wear

A. A uniform can be:

1. a uniform color and style scheme; for example, white button-down shirts or turtleneck shirts and black or navy pants or skirts bought anywhere; or
2. a manufactured, formal and traditional uniform, such as jumpers, pants, plaid outfits, shirts, sweaters, with school emblems, etc.; such clothing is usually purchased from one vendor or local store that supplies uniforms; or
3. a combination of both of these approaches; for example, a uniform color scheme (e.g., yellow tops and black bottoms) as well as a manufactured sweater or jacket with the school's emblem on it.

B. Uniforms may not consist of clothing which constitutes a health or safety hazard or which is disruptive to the educative process.



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- C. A school cannot require girls to wear skirts. All schools must offer girls the option of wearing pants.
- D. Every effort should be made to select a uniform that is durable, easy-to-care-for, and cost-effective.

II. Effective Date of Policy and Early Implementation

- A. The Board's uniform policy permits individual schools to determine whether to opt out of the mandatory uniform requirement.
- B. By April 30, 1999, each school must determine whether to opt out of the mandatory uniform requirement in accordance with the procedures described below.
- C. Schools which have a uniform policy in place prior to promulgation of this regulation may continue to have that policy in effect for the 1998 – 1999 school year. Thereafter, each school must comply with all of the procedures described below.

III. Voting Procedures

A. **School Opt-Out**

1. To opt out of the uniform policy, each school leadership team must vote to do so by April 30, 1999 and, at a minimum, every three years thereafter.
2. If the school does not opt out of the uniform requirement, the school leadership team must vote by April 30th to determine:
 - (a) what the uniform will be** (see section I)

* Schools which seek to implement a uniform policy for the first time effective the 1998 – 1999 school year, must do so in accordance with the procedures described herein.

** While the school leadership team must select a uniform, it cannot designate an official uniform vendor.



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- (b) whether discipline will be imposed for failure to comply with the policy (applicable only after January 3, 2000 and only to those students whose parents have not obtained an exemption) (see section VI); and
 - (c) whether a loaner uniform will be made available for the day to those students who fail to report in uniform.
- 3. Prior to the establishment of a school-based leadership team, the individual school-based planning team may vote instead. If a school does not have a school-based planning team, a similarly constituted body in the school, comprised of parents, teachers and administrators, may vote instead.

B. Consultation

- 1. Prior to determining whether to opt out of the uniform requirement, the school leadership team must consult with the schools P.A. or P.T.A.
- 2. Toward this end, each school leadership team must co-host with its P.A. or P.T.A. at least one open forum for parents, teachers, students and administrators. Proper written notice, ten days in advance, must be given for the meeting and it must be held at a convenient time for parents, teachers, students and administrators to attend.
- 3. The purpose of the consultation is to discuss and ascertain the view of parents, staff and students with respect to:
 - (a) whether the school should opt out of the uniform requirement;
 - (b) if the school does not opt out of the uniform requirement, what the uniform should be;



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- (c) if the school does not opt out of the uniform requirement, whether discipline will be imposed for failure to comply after January 3, 2000; and
 - (d) if the school does not opt out of the uniform requirement, whether a loaner uniform will be made available for the day to those students who fail to report in uniform.
- 4. Based upon feedback from this forum(s), the P.T.A./P.A. may vote to recommend to the school-based leadership team that the school should opt out of the uniform requirement.
 - 5. In addition to the forum(s) specified in III.B.2 above, the school leadership team may use other consultative methods (e.g., parent surveys, school newsletters)

IV. Purchasing of Uniforms

- A.** A P.A./P.T.A. cannot solicit or accept gifts of any kind on behalf of the P.A./P.T.A. from a uniform vendor. However, this does not preclude the P.A./P.T.A. from negotiating with a vendor for the donation of uniforms to the school.
- B.** Individual P.A./P.T.A. executive board members cannot solicit or accept uniforms, money or other items as a gift for their personal use from a vendor for recommending other parents to that vendor. This does not preclude a parent from accepting a free uniform or part of a uniform from a vendor who offers it as an incentive for that parent's purchase of a certain volume of clothing.
- C.** The sale of uniforms cannot be used as a fundraiser for either the school or P.A./P.T.A.
- D.** School personnel and P.A./P.T.A.s may not collect funds from parents for the purchase of uniforms.
- E.** School personnel and P.A./P.T.A.s are prohibited from providing vendors with student/parent names and addresses.



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V. Notice

- A.** If the school leadership team does not vote to opt out of the uniform requirement, the principal/designee must ensure that parents, staff and students receive written notice of the uniform policy. Such notice must be provided annually.
- B.** The notice must:
1. describe and/or enclose a photograph of the uniform and explain the purpose, expectations and benefits of the uniform policy;
 2. list the range of costs for each item of clothing;
 3. advise parents that they must purchase the uniforms directly and where the uniform can be purchased if specific articles of clothing have been designated; however, parents shall be advised that they may purchase clothing which satisfies the uniform requirement at any vendor/store of their choice;
 4. advise parents of their right to secure an exemption from the uniform requirement;
 5. advise parents that if they cannot afford to buy a uniform, they may contact the district or the principal's designee at the school to request financial assistance and that such request shall be kept confidential; and
 6. advise parents whether discipline will be imposed for failure to comply with the uniform requirement (applicable only after January 3, 2000 and only to those students whose parents have not obtained an exemption).



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VI. Parental Right to Secure an Exemption

If a school does not opt out of the uniform requirement, a student's parent* still has the right to secure an exemption from the policy. In order to secure an exemption, the student's parent must:

- A.** complete and return an Exemption Form (attachment A) to the principal of the school;
- B.** have a conference with a designated school official who will fully explain the reasons for and benefits of the school's uniform policy to the parent; and
- C.** agree that the student will wear appropriate dress, as determined by the principal; i.e. clothing which does not constitute a health or safety hazard and which is not disruptive to the educative process.

VII. Discipline (after January 3, 2000)

- A.** Discipline of any kind for failure to wear a uniform may only be imposed after January 3, 2000 by amendment of the school's discipline policy following consultation with the P.A./P.T.A.
- B.** In all schools which have not opted out of the uniform requirement, incentives and positive reinforcement measures to encourage full compliance with the uniform policy by students whose parents have not obtained an exemption shall be developed and implemented.
- C.** If the school's leadership team has determined that students who do not comply with the uniform policy will be disciplined, students whose parents have not obtained an exemption shall be subject to discipline as set forth below.

* The term "parent," whenever used in this regulation, shall mean the student's parent(s) or any person(s) or agency in a parental or custodial relationship to the student or any individual designated by the parent to act in loco parents.



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- D.** Disciplinary action cannot exceed a sanction Level II as defined by the Board of Education's Discipline Code. Schools may impose any of the following measures for failure to comply with a uniform requirement:
1. student/teacher conference
 2. reprimand by school staff (e.g., dean, teacher)
 3. parent conference
 4. reprimand by appropriate supervisor (e.g., assistant principal, principal)
- E.** Students shall not be suspended from class or school; or sent home to retrieve a uniform; or given a lower academic grade or receive any other academic punishment; or be prohibited from participating in a school or extracurricular activity as a result of not complying with the uniform policy.
- F.** No student shall be considered non-compliant with the mandatory uniform policy if the student's parent has received an exemption from the policy.
- G.** Community School Boards shall amend district discipline codes to be consistent with the City Board's Discipline Code.

VIII. Assistance to Families Who Cannot Afford Uniforms

- A.** No child may be denied a uniform because of economic hardship. Each community school district/school must maintain a plan to obtain uniforms for families who demonstrate that they are unable to purchase them.
- B.** Each school shall designate a staff member to coordinate requests for financial assistance.
- C.** Community school districts/schools shall seek to obtain donations of uniforms from vendors or local stores working with the schools.



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- D.** Additionally, schools shall develop “pass-along” programs in which uniforms that are outgrown by students or not needed by graduates are donated to the school.
- E.** District and school staff will collaborate and work together with the local community and business partners to secure alternative avenues of funding and to identify resources for assisting families.
- F.** Central staff will provide technical assistance and help coordinate efforts to procure financial assistance.
- G.** Requests from families for financial assistance shall be acted upon expeditiously and confidentially.
- H.** Cash or other types of monetary assistance must not be provided to parents to purchase uniforms.

IX. Reporting Requirements

- A.** By November 1, 1999, each school shall submit the following information to the superintendent and the Office of Community Relations (see Attachment B):
 - 1. whether or not the school opted out of the uniform requirement
 - 2. how many students applied and were provided with financial assistance for purposes of obtaining a uniform
 - 3. the procedures used to provide financial assistance
 - 4. how many parents opted out of the uniform requirement
 - 5. feedback/input from parents/schools regarding purchasing practices and/or suppliers
- B.** By November 30, 1999, each superintendent shall submit a report to the Office of Community Relations summarizing data and recommending



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amendments of the Board's mandatory uniform policy and/or this regulation (see Attachment C)

X. Support from the Office of Community Relations (OCR)

Parents, teachers, students and administrators who have questions about this policy should first try to resolve them at the school level or district level. If this is not possible, questions can be directed to the Office of Community Relations at **(718) 935-5311**. Requests for presentations by the Office of Community Relations' staff members at open forums held at schools, can be directed to this number as well.

XI. Inquiries

Inquiries regarding this regulation should be addressed to

Telephone
(718) 935-3370

Office of Community Relations
110 Livingston Street - Room 406
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Fax
(718) 935-5796

New York City Board of Education

Uniform Dress Exemption Form

I, _____, (parent, guardian or person in parental relation) request that _____ be exempt from compliance with PS/IS _____'s Uniform Dress Policy.

OPTIONAL

For information purposes, please indicate reason(s) for exemption request:

- religious (If this reason is checked, a conference is not required.)
- medical
- other _____

I understand that in order to obtain an exemption, I am required to have a conference (by telephone or in person) with the school's appointed designee who will fully explain the reasons and benefits of the school's uniform policy. I agree tht my son-daughter will wear appropriate dress, as determined by the principal; i.e. clothing which does not constitute a health or safety hazard and which is not disruptive to the education process.

Parent's (or Guardian's) Signature: _____

Principal's Signature: _____

Date: _____

UNIFORM POLICY REPORT FROM SCHOOLS TO SUPERINTENDENT and OFFICE OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS

1. Name of School: _____
District: _____ # of Students: _____

2. An open forum co-hosted by the School Leadership Team and the PA/PTA to discuss the uniform policy took place on: (date) _____

3. The PA/PTA voted to recommend that the school opt-out implement the uniform requirement.

4. The following school body voted:

- school leadership team
- school-based planning team
- other: (specify below)

_____ on (date) to opt-out implement the uniform requirement.

If there was no vote to opt-out, complete the following:

5. Describe uniform chosen:

6. Provide any feedback about parents' experiences with purchasing uniforms from local stores/suppliers:

7. Name of person at school designated to meet with parents and answer questions about the uniform policy:

Name: _____ Title: _____
Telephone Number: _____

8. Number of students whose parents completed an Exemption Form: _____

9. Please indicate the reasons parents may have offered to request that their child opt-out:

- religious
- medical
- other: (specify below)

10. Please describe the positive incentives used to help implement the policy:

11. How many parents applied for financial assistance for purchasing a uniform?: _____

12. How many were provided with financial assistance?: _____

13. Describe efforts to provide financial assistance:

14. Comments/suggestions regarding the uniform policy:

Please Return this form to: ***YOUR SUPERINTENDENT***

AND TO ...

BY MAIL

**New York City Board of Education
Office of Community Relations
110 Livingston Street, Room 406
Brooklyn, New York 11201**

BY FAX:

(718) 935-5796

**If you have any questions, please contact the
Office of Community Relations at (718) 935-5311.**

UNIFORM POLICY REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENTS to the OFFICE OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS

1. This is to certify that in District: _____ Where we have _____ schools:
_____ Voted to opt out of the uniform requirement*

2. Provide any feedback about your District's experiences with purchasing uniforms from local stores/suppliers:

3. Please describe some of the positive incentives used to help implement the policy at the District level:

4. Describe District efforts to provide financial assistance:

5. Comments/suggestions recommending amendments of the Board's mandatory uniform policy and/or regulation:

This form must be submitted by November 30, 1999.

* Indicate in the space provided the number of schools that chose this option.

Please Return this form to:

BY MAIL

**New York City Board of Education
Office of Community Relations
110 Livingston Street, Room 406
Brooklyn, New York 11201**

BY FAX:

(718) 935-5796

**If you have any questions, please contact the
Office of Community Relations at (718) 935-5311.**