

Policy

CONDUCT AND DRESS

The Board of Education expects staff conduct to be that of appropriate role models for pupils.

The Board expects all staff members to be neatly groomed and dressed in clothing suitable for the subject of instruction, the work being performed, or the occasion.

The Board is cognizant of the rights of employees to express their individuality through their attire. The Board also recognizes the value of tasteful and appropriate dress which is conducive to a positive environment for learning and fosters respect and discipline in the classroom situation. The Board believes that teachers serve as role models for the children of our schools, and help shape the students' attitudes and values concerning neatness, pride and cleanliness.

Balancing these factors, the Board has adopted a dress code for employees that sets reasonable standards for grooming and appearance during school hours. This dress code is to be enforced fairly and evenhandedly at all times, and shall be reviewed biannually for reasonableness under the standard of generally acceptable dress in business and social contexts within changing community attitudes.

The Board expects teachers and administrators to observe standards of professional dress in the Plainfield Schools in order to maintain the dignity of the education profession and serve as positive role models for the students.

The Board retains the authority to specify the following dress and grooming guidelines for staff, within law, that will prevent such matters from having an adverse impact on the educational process. All staff members Certificated and Non-Certificated shall, when assigned to district duty:

- A. Be physically clean, neat and well groomed;
- B. Dress in a manner reflecting their assignments;
- C. Dress in a manner that does not cause damage to district property;
- D. Dress and be groomed in such a way so as not to cause a health or safety hazard.

Grooming and attire shall meet the following criteria during school hours:

- A. Females shall wear skirts, slacks, blouses or sweaters, dresses, or slack suits.
- B. Males shall wear shirts and slacks and slacks with sweaters or jackets.
- C. All staff members shall maintain clean and well-groomed hairstyles.

Grooming and dress not acceptable during school hours:

- A. Male and female staff members shall not wear hats, caps, etc. in the classroom or unless it is worn for religious observance.
- B. Inappropriate foot wear: thongs, flip flops, bedroom slippers, beachwear or galoshes;

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- C. Revealing or excessively tight fitting clothing;
- D. T-shirts or undershirts (plain or decorated) worn as outside clothing;
- E. Army fatigues or industrial uniforms (custodial/maintenance staff are exempt);
- F. Any dress or grooming which would attract undue attention, create disruption or would be potentially unsanitary or dangerous.

Special Rules

- A. Physical Education/Health - Physical education and health teachers may wear clothing appropriate to their subject area. This would include athletic jackets, shirts, pullover shirts, shorts, culottes, jogging suits, warm-ups, and appropriate footwear. Swimming suits may be worn alone only in the pool area
- B. Vocational Education - Shop teachers may wear smocks, shop aprons, coveralls, or other protective attire appropriate for the subject area. Safety equipment such as glasses, goggles, protective leather sleeves or chaps, or hard hats shall be worn as required by other regulations, statute or policy.
- C. Other Classes - Other protective clothing such as smocks, lab coats, and aprons may be worn as needed by teachers in laboratory science, art, cosmetology or kindergarten. Eye protection shall be worn as otherwise required.
- D. Other Employees - Employees involved in transportation, maintenance and custodial staff, and cafeteria workers, shall wear appropriate clothing to accommodate their working situations as determined by contractual provision or their supervisor.

If a staff member feels that an exception to this policy would enable him/her to carry out assigned duties more effectively, a request shall be made to the Chief School Administrator.

The regular dress code requirements as set forth in this policy may be suspended for classroom, school and/or district activities as appropriate. Any variation of the district dress code policy must be approved by the Chief School Administrator or his/her designee prior to the activity.

Severability

This Dress code shall be deemed to be severable. If any section is found to be unreasonable or avoid by a forum of competent jurisdiction, only that section shall be deemed deleted.

The personal life of an employee is not an appropriate concern of the Board except as it may directly prevent the employee from performing his/her properly assigned functions during the work day or affect his/her professional relationship with the students.

Unbecoming Conduct

When an employee, either within the schools or outside normal duties, creates conditions under which the proper operation of the schools is affected, the Board upon recommendation of the Chief School Administrator and in accordance with statute shall determine whether such acts or lack of actions constitute conduct unbecoming a school employee, and if so, will proceed against the employee in accordance with law.

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Unbecoming (not according with the standards appropriate to one's position) conduct sufficient to warrant Board review may result from a single flagrant incident or from a series of incidents.

Adopted: March 20, 1997
Amended: May 19, 2009
Amended: November 18, 2014

Key Words

Employee Conduct, Employee Dress

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 18A:6-10 Dismissal and reduction in compensation of persons under tenure in public school system
N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties
N.J.S.A. 18A:27-4 Power of Boards of education to make rules governing employment of teacher, etc., employment thereunder
N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of Board (county vocational schools)

Hicks v. Pemberton Bd. of Ed., 1975 S.L.D. 332

Quiroli v. Linwood Bd. of Ed., 1974 S.L.D. 1035

Carlstadt Teachers Ass'n v. Carlstadt Bd. of Ed., App. Div., unreported decision (docket no. A-1469-80-T4, decided March 26, 1982), 1982 S.L.D. 1448

Possible

Cross References: 4117.50 Standards for staff discipline
4119.2 Responsibilities
*4119.21 Conflict of interest
*4119.23 Employee substance abuse
4119.24 Staff/pupil relations
*4138 Nonschool employment
*4138.2 Private tutoring
*6144 Controversial issues

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.