

Plainfield Central Middle School

Letter to Parents and Guardians

April 4, 2011

Subject: Dress Code

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Recently, I received questions about the school dress code and its enforcement. Our dress code was developed to provide all students with an environment that is safe and free from excessive distractions. It is reviewed on a yearly basis with changes made as needed due mostly to safety concerns. Addressing dress codes is often a sensitive subject both with adults and children, and one which teachers and administrators fear due to potential allegations towards them of a sexual nature. However, we are responsible for enforcing adopted policies and providing a school environment which is safe for students and adults alike.

Many of our dress code issues have involved the revealing nature of shirts and tank tops that female students are wearing to school. While they are usually worn under a button up shirt or zip-up sweatshirt, the outer garments are often unzipped or unbuttoned to the extent that they are revealing. This is not appropriate in a middle school with children 10-14 years old. Clothing that is revealing can easily become a distraction to surrounding students and interferes with their learning. We are obligated to apply rules uniformly. When clothing shows the chest area below the manubrium, which is the upper part of the sternum, then it does not meet the dress code.

Two other issues that we have been addressing concern the way students have been wearing their pants. One of the issues that is appearing this year and is not found in our published dress code is pants and jeans that are being worn with holes in the upper thigh area. We have told students that this will be handled in the same manner as shorts and skirts. If holes in pants are above students' finger tips when their arms and hands are at their sides, then it is a dress code violation. The other issue is when pants hang below the shirt line and reveal students' underwear. While this problem not new, we address it on a regular basis and provide students with belts, when needed.

We attempt to handle all dress code violations in a way that draws the least amount of attention as possible to the student. In an attempt to improve consistency in our response to the dress code we plan to address the matter in the following manner:

1. Students will be given an opportunity to correct the problem themselves, such as buttoning the shirt, pulling up the zipper, or pulling up and securing their pants. If they have appropriate attire in their locker, they will be given an opportunity to change clothes. If the student is dressed inappropriately later in the day after making the correction, that will be considered insubordination subject to regular school discipline.
2. Students unable to adjust their attire to meet the dress code will be offered a T-shirt, belt, etc., whichever resolves the issue.

3. Students who refuse the T-shirt or belt, etc. will need to call parents to bring them the proper attire. Students will remain in the office or other location at the administration's discretion until the clothing arrives.
4. Each dress code violation will result in a warning and letter to parents/guardians. After the second warning, students will be subject to school discipline.

The published dress code has not been included with this letter because it was sent home as part of the April Newsletter. We have posted a brochure with examples of what is appropriate and inappropriate attire along with the Student Handbook on our website. We are also open to parent input and suggestions. We will be reviewing the entire student handbook over the next month because it needs to go to the printer in late May or early June. If you have any suggestions, you are welcome to email them to me at davisj@plainfieldschools.org or stop by to discuss them.

Sincerely,

Jerry Davis, Principal