

Policy Name: National School Uniform and Dress Code	
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<p>Cross References: This policy should be cross-referenced with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cayman Islands Constitution Bill of Rights (2009) • Gender Equality Law (2011) • National Policy for Dealing with Complaints about Schools (2014) <p>Guidance documents produced by the Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs that accompany this policy are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Code of Conduct- Teacher Guidance (2014) • National Home-School Agreement (2014) 	

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to outline the national expectations that apply to all Government Schools in relation to the school uniform and dress code. The Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs (the Ministry) is committed to working with the Department of Education Services (DES), parents, students and schools to develop welcoming, supportive and inclusive learning environments that promote the well-being of all students and staff. School uniform is an important component in establishing a safe environment for optimal learning and respect. This is because wearing school uniform instils a feeling of pride, belonging and discipline in students.

AIMS

This policy aims to:

- State clearly the National standards for the school uniform and dress code in all Government schools.
- Provide guidance in relation to acceptable exemptions and strategies for dealing with non-compliance.

POLICY STATEMENT

All Government schools have a school uniform and students are expected to wear the uniform specified by their school. Each individual school will outline expectations with respect to their own uniform, in relation to the colour and style of socks, pants, skirts, shirts, blouses, belts undershirts and required PE kit. However the following are national expectations which apply to all schools:

- Uniforms should be properly fitting.
- Skirts are required to be no shorter than one inch above the knee.
- All students are required to wear black shoes/sneakers that do not contain other colours.
- Boots, sandals and slippers are not allowed.
- Small plain stud earrings, without gem stones are permitted and should be worn in the lower ear lobe. Except for a watch, no other jewellery should be worn.*
- Items that display connection with gangs are not allowed e.g. badges, tattoos, colours or tagging.
- Hair should be groomed and, if worn long, be tied back with a black or brown hair band for health and safety reasons. Hair is required to be a natural colour, and extremes of hairstyles, such as a Mohawk, shaved lines/words, are not permitted. No beads should be worn in the hair.
- Shaved eyebrows are not permitted.
- Makeup, nail polish and false nails are not permitted.

*Please note students at Light House School are not permitted to wear any earrings to safeguard the health and safety of students and staff.

INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE POLICIES

School policies on school uniform and dress must:

- adhere to standards of dress and appearance that are compatible with an effective learning environment.
- be sensitive to gender and local cultural and social issues including cultural and religious diversity.
- meet requirements of occupational health and safety (see appendix 1), anti-discrimination (see appendix 2) and equal opportunity (see appendix 3) legislation.
- promote the health and safety of students by identifying items necessary for particular activities e.g. items for sun protection.
- include items that are affordable, comfortable, made from easy-care and easy wear fabrics, appropriate for activity and suitable for all body shapes.
- provide girls and boys with equal access to the full range of school activities.
- include processes for short or long term exemptions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ministry of Education will:

- Provide the National policy expectations and supporting guidance to all relevant stakeholders.
- Provide expectations in relation to each individual school's uniform and dress code within the student code of conduct.
- Provide expert advice to the DES to support the implementation of the policy by:

- devising targeted training for DES and school staff in relation to the student code of conduct and dealing with incidents of non-compliance of the school uniform and dress code.
- providing the framework for schools to monitor compliance with the school uniform and dress code and to use their data to inform associated improvement plans.

The Education Quality Assurance Unit will:

- In the course of inspections or as required, evaluate implementation of school uniform and dress code policies, using the criteria set out in the *Handbook for the Evaluation of Educational Provision* and make recommendations for improvement.
- Provide accurate and timely information to the Ministry of Education on the effectiveness of the student code of conduct, when required, in order to inform policy decisions.

The Department of Education Services will:

- Establish monitoring procedures to ensure school policies are compliant with National policy expectations.
- Ensure school policies are implemented and maintained.
- Monitor the performance of schools in relation to implementing the school uniform and dress code policy and work with school leadership teams to evaluate data to identify priorities for improvement.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies and stakeholders to develop and maintain appropriate systems for supporting school discipline and student behaviour in relation to the uniform and dress code.

School leaders will:

- Implement individual school student codes of conduct with respect to the school uniform and dress code.
- Monitor and review the provision, strategies and practice in their schools in relation to the school uniform and dress code.
- Maintain accurate school data to identify school trends and inform the allocation of resources.
- Facilitate on-going professional development on issues relating to effective management of student behaviour to support compliance with expectations.
- Be accountable to the DES for standards of student behaviour, discipline and achievement.

School staff will:

- Effectively monitor and implement expectations about the school uniform and dress code using the tiers of intervention.
- Record and report data relating to non-compliance of the school uniform and dress code as stated in the student code of conduct.
- Manage the school environment effectively; clearly communicating measures to ensure good order, respect and discipline.

Exemptions

From time to time, individual parents or carers may seek variations in school uniform requirements or in exceptional circumstances, exemptions. Any variations or exemptions of school uniform should be agreed with the Principal.

Short-term variations to school uniform requirements

These can be provided to students where temporary circumstances prevent the wearing of the school uniform. For example, circumstances where a student is staying with extended family or other short-term carer(s) but will remain at their home school. Short-term exemptions may also be provided for temporary health issues and temporary or extreme weather conditions that require the wearing of protective or other clothing outside uniform requirements. School procedures for seeking a short-term exemption should be documented, such as a letter from parents or verbal communication with them; followed by procedures for granting an exemption, such as the provision of an exemption card.

Long-term exemptions

These would be provided when:

- an aspect of the school uniform and dress code prevents students from complying with a requirement due to their ethno-religious background.
- the student has a particular health condition or disability that requires a modification of an aspect of the uniform requirements.
- the student is disadvantaged in complying with an aspect of the uniform because of other personal circumstances outlined in anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation.

In many cases a slight modification of the school uniform requirement may be all that is needed, rather than a long-term exemption. Therefore, a centralised record of requested exemptions and modifications should be kept. Where patterns of exemptions and modifications are identified over a period of time they should be taken into account in a subsequent review of school uniform requirements.

Some students and their families may have an aversion to applying for exemptions from wearing the uniform. In these cases it may be helpful to adopt informal processes to support compliance with the school uniform and dress code whilst being sensitive to the issues stated above.

GUIDANCE

Dealing with non-compliance regarding school uniform and dress code

Principals may be faced with conscientious or 'principled' objections by individual parents to their child's wearing of a school uniform, or of individual items specified within school uniform and dress code requirements.

Objections may be based on sensitive issues, such as cultural or family traditions, family circumstances or financial issues that may not be disclosed readily. These objections must be respected. Non-confrontational approaches should be used to engage parents in clarifying the reasons for their objection. In such cases short-term variations or long-term exemptions may apply.

However students are expected to conform to the school uniform rules. If a student does not comply with expectations without an exemption having been authorised, then consequences should be applied as described in the Student Code of Conduct- Teacher guidance or as follows:

- speaking to the student (preferably in private) to encourage wearing of the school uniform.
- providing a verbal warning to student.
- providing advice to the parents via a phone call or letter from the Principal.
- inviting parents to the school to discuss the situation with the Principal or another staff member.
- negotiating an appropriate course of action with the student and parents.
- applying appropriate sanctions to non-compliant students including:
 - requiring students to remove make-up or jewellery, or to wear loaned uniform, provided by the school. Parents should be informed and the incident noted.
 - sending students home to change into appropriate uniform. Parents should be informed, the incident noted and the absence recorded for each session missed by the student.
 - detaining students during break or lunch, or (for persistent offenders) arranging alternative provision, either during normal hours, or at alternative times within the extended school day.

Recognising and encouraging the wearing of school uniforms

Praise and recognition are strong motivators for students and positive approaches to recognise and encourage those students who wear school uniform should be taken. Rewards should be applied consistent with the Student Code of Conduct-Teacher Guidance or as follows:

- formal recognition of students at assemblies or by other means.
- reference to the uniform as part of recognition and promotion of the spirit of the school.
- personal letters of acknowledgement to parents and students from the Principal.
- positive comments in school reports about individual students who support the school ethos, have pride in their school and represent it well.
- reminders to students in practical classes that standards of dress have been agreed upon for the health and safety of students.
- for senior students, reference to the school as a workplace and reminding students of the standards valued by the broader community and in workplaces.
- staff modelling of those standards.

- involvement of student representative councils and other student bodies in developing, discussing and promoting school uniforms.
- consideration of alternative uniform items suggested by students which meet uniform requirements, but may be better styled, easier to look after, or more comfortable.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX I

Health and Safety

The Ministry requires schools to identify any foreseeable hazard that has the potential to harm the health and safety of any person on its premises and to take steps to identify and eliminate or control such risks. A school uniform and dress code policy must take into account these requirements. Examples of where a school has a duty to require a standard of dress in the educational setting include, but are not limited to:

- requiring students to wear appropriate hairstyle, footwear, eyewear or other protective clothing so as to avoid injury.
- requiring students to wear a hat for outside activities when appropriate.
- requiring that jewellery or other items that could, with reasonable foreseeability, cause an injury to themselves or other students are not worn.

School staff have a responsibility to report potential and actual health, safety and welfare hazards to the Principal.

APPENDIX 2

Anti-discrimination

Anti-discrimination legislation within the Cayman Islands Constitution makes it unlawful for schools to discriminate against students on grounds of race, gender, religion or disability. Two forms of discrimination are defined below:

- Direct discrimination means treatment that is obviously unfair or unequal.
- Indirect discrimination refers to a requirement, or rule, that is the same for everyone but has an unequal impact and is unreasonable in particular circumstances.
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Both are contrary to the Bill of Rights within the Cayman Islands Constitution. School uniform and dress code policies should be developed with these requirements in mind. Flexibility must be used where implementation of the school uniform affects some students unequally; for example, where an aspect of the school uniform offends an ethno-religious belief held by students or parents. Other examples could include the disability or age of an individual student which requires a departure from an aspect of the school uniform

APPENDIX 3

Equal opportunity

The implications of equal opportunity legislation are such that uniforms must enable both sexes to participate actively and safely in school life.