

**Bessemer City Board of Education
Middle and High School
Dress Code**

Purpose and Intent

A standardized dress code for Bessemer City Schools has been adopted to ensure that all students are provided safe and appropriate educational opportunities which are free from unnecessary disruptions or outside influences and to instill in students the need to dress appropriately and have respect for each other and authority. For young people, especially teenagers who are beginning to find their true identities in the middle of peer-pressure and parent prodding, dress is an important issue. For the younger children, lifetime habits of taste and dress are greatly affected by their childhood dressing patterns. This dress code will be strictly enforced in Bessemer City Schools, middle through high schools.

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the following explanation behind the choice of the standards. The way a person dresses reflects the way he/she thinks. We want to prepare students for the world of work, and we believe a neat professional appearance is a good habit to develop in the childhood years. Just as students would dress one way for a picnic or ball game, there is an appropriate way to dress for school. A well-groomed student should come to school with an attitude that prepares him or her for neat, conscientious work. His or her attire should give him or her respect for self, fellow students, and teachers. Students who have questionable or inappropriate dress will not be allowed to attend class. The following items will serve as a minimum guide to acceptable dress for the Bessemer City School students.

The Board's dress code guidelines are intended to promote and foster an appropriate educational environment by minimizing unnecessary distractions and permitting students to focus on academic progress. The following mandatory guidelines are designed to further that intent:

Any student who fails to dress appropriately will not be allowed to attend class until proper clothing can be secured. If necessary, parents will be called to bring proper clothes to school. The student will be responsible for all class work missed. Nonconformity to the dress code is a Class I offense.

Dress Code Guidelines

- A. All students must wear shirts, blouses, or dresses with a non-revealing neckline. Low cut, open back, bare midriff or clothing that allows the midriff to be exposed or cleavage exposed, are not permitted.
- B. Students may wear sleeveless garments which adequately cover undergarments. Spaghetti and/or thin-strapped shirts may be worn only if over another shirt or if covered by a blouse/shirt with sleeves. Only sleeveless blouses or dresses in which the shoulder is fully covered from the base of the neck to the top of the arm will be considered acceptable.
- C. No obscene language and/or illegal substances advertisements (to include alcoholic and tobacco advertisements) may be worn on clothing or accessories. i.e. Insignias, buttons, and clothing which are suggestive of wine, beer, whiskey, tobacco, vulgarities, violence or are drug-related and demeaning to others are banned and may not be worn at school.
- D. Pants, shorts, and skirts must be worn at the waist and fit properly. Pants worn too low, too long, too large, too short, too tight, or too loose are not permitted. Sweat pants and jogging pants are allowed as long as they are properly fitted. Pajamas are prohibited. Skirts, shorts, and dresses must be mid-thigh or longer in front and back. No slits or leg openings may be allowed above mid-thigh. Leggings should be worn with the appropriate outer garments and tops must reach mid-thigh or longer front and back. Sagging pants are not allowed.
- E. It is recommended that shirts be tucked in at all times unless designed to be worn on the outside. Shirts should fit properly.
- F. No hats, caps, head coverings, hair curlers/rollers, bonnets, picks, bandanas, wave caps, head scarves, athletic sweatbands, head dressings, or sun glasses will be worn in school. Head coverings are allowed only as religious attire.
- G. Students are required to wear appropriate shoes at all times. Shoes with wheels or lights are not appropriate for the school environment. Tennis shoes will be required for physical education class. No flip-flops, slides or slippers (house shoes) are allowed. Only shoes appropriate for the school environment, with safety being the primary concern, may be worn.

- H. Student's clothing should be neat and clean and not in noticeable disrepair. Unhemmed (cut-off) shorts, skirts, shirts, pants, and garments with inappropriate holes or inappropriate slits are not allowed. Jeans and other articles of clothing must be clean with no open holes above the knee. No shredded jeans are allowed.
- I. Undergarments must be worn and not be visible.
- J. Earrings may be worn. Except for the piercing of the earlobes and wearing of earrings that do not distract or draw unnecessary attention, the wearing of other body jewelry is not allowed, including but not limited to the tongue, nose, or eyebrow. Band-Aids may not be worn to conceal unauthorized jewelry. Materials such as plastic or wooden sticks or clear loops may not be worn to keep new piercings open during the school day. If it is determined by a school principal or designee that allowable earrings or jewelry worn by a student may become a safety hazard in an activity such as physical education, science laboratory, athletics, etc., the student shall remove such ornamentation.
- K. Students are prohibited from wearing any metal chains, metal spiked apparel, or accessories.
- L. Students are to wear clothing in the manner it is designed to be worn, i.e., clothing worn backwards or inside out is not allowed. Not excessively tight or revealing clothing, such as see-through or mesh garments, may be worn.
- M. Students are prohibited from wearing any sign, symbol, logo, or garment, which has become associated with any gang, cult, Satanism, or unauthorized club or organizational activity. This also includes any avenue for the promotion of products or activities prohibited by school policy or that is inflammatory and may generate negative feelings among the student body.
- N. Book bags/back packs and athletic bags must be placed in a designated area and remain there during the school day. Backpacks/book bags must be clear, transparent or mesh for safety reasons and not have wheels, unless written approval is given by a physician due to medical reasons.
- O. Jackets, coats and sweaters may be worn. Generally, these are inappropriate to be worn in the classroom.

The above items serve as a minimum guide. The principal shall have the discretion to outline other appropriate guidelines for the school campus or for special occasions.

Enforcement of Dress Code

Parents, teachers, and principals will strictly enforce the dress code. A student may be sent home to make any necessary adjustments. Since this normally works a greater hardship on the parents and guardians than the students, parents are urged to supervise their child's dress on a daily basis, taking an active role in supporting this dress code.

Source: Bessemer City Board of Education, Bessemer, AL
Alabaster City Board of Education, Alabaster, AL
Jefferson County Board of Education, Birmingham, AL

Legal Reference: Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (No. 21,) 393
U.S. 503. (1969)

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