

Category: **STUDENTS**

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Number: **A-665**

Subject: UNIFORM POLICY

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## **SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

This regulation implements the Department of Education's voluntary uniform policy and supersedes Chancellor's Regulation A-665: Mandatory Uniform Policy issued December 4, 1998.

### Changes:

- This regulation applies to students in all grades.
- All schools may choose to adopt a uniform requirement.
- The office responsible for providing support and assistance regarding this regulation is the Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy.

### **ABSTRACT**

This regulation implements a voluntary uniform policy for students in all grades and sets forth the procedures for establishing such a policy.

The voluntary uniform policy is intended to help schools 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 a 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 that constitutes a health or safety hazard that is disruptive to the educative process.
- 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. IMPLEMENTATION**

- A. The uniform policy permits individual schools to adopt a uniform requirement.
- B. Each school that adopts a uniform requirement must comply with the procedures described below.

#### **III. ADOPTION OF UNIFORM POLICY**

- A. Consultation with Parents<sup>1</sup>
  - 1. Prior to determining whether to adopt a uniform requirement, the school leadership team must consult with the school’s parent association (PA) or parent teacher association (PTA).
  - 2. Toward this end, each school leadership team must co-host with its PA/PTA at least one open forum for parents, teachers, students, and administrators. Proper written notice, at least ten calendar 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. In addition to the forum specified in above, the school leadership team may use other consultative methods (e.g., parent surveys, school newsletters, etc.) to gather input prior to making a decision.
  - 4. The purpose of the consultation is to discuss and ascertain the view of parents, staff, and students with respect to:

<sup>1</sup> 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 parentis.

- a. whether the school should adopt a uniform requirement;
  - b. if the school adopts a uniform requirement, what the uniform should be; and
  - c. if the school adopts a uniform requirement, whether a loaner uniform will be made available for the day to those students who fail to report in uniform.
5. Based upon feedback from this consultation, the PA/PTA should make recommendations to the school leadership team.
- B. School Leadership Team
1. If the school leadership team votes to adopt a uniform requirement, the school leadership team must determine:
    - a. what the uniform will be (see Section I), and
    - b. whether a loaner uniform will be made available for the day to those students who fail to report in uniform.
  2. Once a school leadership team has voted to adopt a uniform policy that uniform policy will remain in force until the School Leadership Team ("SLT") votes to rescind the uniform policy.
  3. Prior to the establishment of a school leadership team, the individual school-based planning team may vote instead. If a school does not have a school planning team, a similarly constituted body in the school, comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators may vote instead.

#### IV. PURCHASING OF UNIFORMS

- A. A PA/PTA must not solicit or accept gifts of any kind on behalf of the PA/PTA from a uniform vendor. However, this does not preclude the PA/PTA from negotiating with a vendor for the donation of uniforms to the school.
- B. Individual PA/PTA executive board members must not 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 must not be used as a fundraiser for either the school or PA/PTA.
- D. School personnel shall not collect funds from parents for the purchase of uniforms.
- E. In consultation with the school leadership team, a PA/PTA may collect funds from parents to facilitate the purchase of uniforms on their behalf.
- F. School personnel and PAs/PTAs are prohibited from providing vendors with student/parent names and addresses.

#### V. PARENTAL RIGHT TO SECURE AN EXEMPTION

If a school adopts a uniform requirement, a student's parent 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 No. 1) to the principal of the school, and send a copy to the District Family Advocate or the Borough Director as appropriate;
- 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 that does not constitute a health or safety hazard and that is not disruptive to the education process.

**VI. NOTICE**

- A. If the school leadership team votes to adopt a 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 principal's designee at the school. Elementary and middle school parents may also contact the District Family Advocate and/or Borough Director to request financial assistance. (All such requests shall be kept confidential); and
  - 6. advise parents whether discipline will be imposed for failure to comply with the uniform requirement in accordance with the Citywide Discipline Code (applicable only to those students whose parents have not obtained an exemption).

**VII. DISCIPLINE**

- A. All schools that adopt a uniform requirement shall develop and implement incentives and positive reinforcement measures to encourage full compliance with the uniform policy by students whose parents have not obtained an exemption.
- B. Students whose parents have not obtained an exemption within 30 days of receiving notice of the uniform requirement from the school shall be subject to discipline as set forth in the Department of Education's Discipline Code. Disciplinary action cannot exceed the sanctions specified in the Code.
- C. Students shall not be suspended or removed from class or school; sent home to retrieve a uniform; 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.
- D. No student shall be considered non-compliant with the voluntary uniform policy if the student's parent has received an exemption from the policy.

**VIII. ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES WHO CANNOT AFFORD UNIFORMS**

- A. No child may be denied a uniform because of economic hardship. Each 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. Schools shall seek to obtain donations of uniforms from vendors or local stores working with the schools.
- D. 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. 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.

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\*\* Schools cannot designate an official uniform vendor.

- F. The Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy will provide central 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. SUPPORT FROM THE OFFICE FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY**

Parents, teachers, and students who have questions about this policy should ask the parent coordinator or principal at their school. Principals and parent coordinators may direct their questions to the District Family Advocate and/or Borough Director. Questions not answered at the above levels may be directed to the Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy.

Requests for presentations by the Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy at open forums held at schools or for training for Parent Coordinators, can be directed to the Director of Special Services in the Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy at 212-374-2323.

**X. INQUIRIES**

Inquiries regarding this regulation should be addressed to:

Telephone: 212 -374- 2323	<i>Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy</i> New York City Department of Education 49 Chambers Street – Room 503 New York, NY 10007	Fax: 212- 374 -0076
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**UNIFORM EXEMPTION REQUEST**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (parent, guardian or person in parental relation) request that \_\_\_\_\_ be exempt from compliance with PS/IS \_\_\_\_\_'s voluntary 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 voluntary uniform policy. I agree that my son/daughter will wear appropriate dress as determined by the principal; i.e. clothing that 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: \_\_\_\_\_