

CONDUCT AND DRESS

The Oradell Board of Education and the administration believes that the appearance and dress of all staff members is an important component of the educational program of this school district. The staff sets an example in dress and grooming for the pupils to follow. The attitude of staff members about their professional responsibilities and the importance of education in the lives of their pupils are reflected in their dress and appearance. Accordingly, in order to create an atmosphere of respect for all school personnel and an environment conducive to discipline, learning, and safety, the Board establishes the following rules for the dress of staff members in the performance of their professional duties:

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 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.

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.

Dress Code

- A. The expectation of staff is that they are dressed in "Business Casual" attire on a daily basis. Business casual attire shall be defined as:
 - 1. Females shall wear skirts, slacks, capris, blouses, dress tops or sweaters, dresses or suits;
 - 2. Males shall wear collared dress shirts or collared "polo-type" shirts. Appropriate slacks shall be worn;
 - 3. Footwear for males and females should be appropriate to the school environment and the specific job assignment.
- B. At no time may the following be worn except as noted in the exceptions sections of this policy:
 - 1. Tee shirts, sweatshirts/hoodies or sweat/jogging suits;
 - 2. Sneakers or work boots;
 - 3. Tank tops, low-cut tops, thin-strap tops, midriff revealing tops, see through tops. Clothing that bares any part of the mid-section, even if the mid-section is bared unintentionally;
 - 4. Skirts more than 3" above the knee;
 - 5. Cargo pants, low rider pants;
 - 6. Shorts;
 - 7. Any type of shoe without a back/backstrap;
 - 8. Flip flops or any thong-type shoes with or without a backstrap;
 - 9. Leggings without a mid-thigh or longer length top;
 - 10. Any torn, dirty, faded, or wrinkled clothing;

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11. Hats, with the exception of headwear of religious significance, headwear for medical reasons, or headwear necessary for custodial/maintenance activities;
12. Excessively tight clothing or exposed undergarments.

Exceptions

The board recognizes that exceptions need to be made based on the subject/area of employment. These exceptions are considered reasonable when conducting class in the following categories:

A. Physical Education Teacher:

Due to the nature of the discipline, Teachers of Physical Education may wear warm-up, jogging, or wind suits. Sneakers, shorts, and three-button shirts similar to polo shirts are also permitted. Capri pants may also be worn.

The physical education teacher shall follow the faculty dress policy on parent conference days and other occasions when not instructing class.

The physical education teacher's attire must be neat, clean, and free from rips and tears.

B. Custodial/maintenance workers shall wear the regulation uniforms provided by the board at all times.

C. Exceptions for Special Events:

1. Field Day – Staff may wear dark jeans, long shorts, sweatshirts and sneakers. The only tee shirts allowed will be OPS spirit tee shirts sold by the Oradell PTA;
2. Field Trips – If an exception to the dress policy is needed a request may be made to the principal;
3. Spirit Days – On Spirit Days designated by the chief school administrator or the principal dark jeans and OPS spirit wear sold by the Oradell PTA may be worn;
4. Fundraising Days – Staff may request a dress down day to raise funds for a charitable organization. These requests will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the chief school administrator or principal. Dark jeans may be worn.

Standards of Confidentiality

The board of education recognizes that in the course of employment in the school district, it is likely that staff will become aware of personal information about the district's students, as well as about other staff members. Federal law and State law include very specific prohibitions regarding the disclosure of student record information. In addition, the law protects the privacy interests of all individuals.

In order to maintain a collegial and professional workplace, it is essential that all staff remain mindful of the harm that can befall the school community when the privacy of communications is not respected by staff. Even the disclosure of accurate, but private, information can be harmful to individuals and the school in the same way as rumors and innuendo are harmful.

The district must operate as a sensitive and caring place. Every district employee is expected to respect the privacy of students and their families, community volunteers, other staff members, and whomever else the employee encounters in the course of district employment. Failure to abide by these basic rules will be deemed conduct unbecoming and appropriate discipline will be imposed.

Impact on Students

The conduct of district staff has a vital impact upon the students in the school. Therefore, the school staff shall

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strive to model responsible behavior that students may emulate.

Unbecoming Conduct

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 pupils.

When an employee, either within the schools or outside normal duties, creates conditions under which the proper operation of the school 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. Severe cases of unbecoming conduct may necessitate report to the State Board of Examiners and may result in the suspension or revocation of certification.

Unbecoming conduct sufficient to warrant board review may result from a single flagrant incident or from a series of incidents.

Adopted: Nov. 21, 1994
 Revised: April 17, 1995; Sept. 2006; October 2008; August 2016
 NJSBA Review/Update: January 2019
 Readopted: Sept. 27, 2006; Oct 15, 2008; Aug 24, 2016, Dec 11, 2019

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.
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
 *4119.21/4219.21 Conflict of interest
 *4119.23/4219.23 Employee substance abuse
 4119.24 Staff/student relations
 *4138/4238 Nonschool employment
 *4138.2 Private tutoring
 *5131.1 Harassment, intimidation and bullying
 *6144 Controversial issues

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