

Dear Woods Community,

At its November 17, 2022 meeting, The Woods School Board unanimously passed a new dress code policy following careful listening, research and discussion. This new dress code will take effect when school resumes after Winter Break on January 2, 2023. Please see the current policy juxtaposed with the new policy on the next page.

The first sentence of the new dress code captures important guiding principles by which the Board developed this policy: *The goal of the Woods Charter School dress code is to create a safe and affirming environment for all students and faculty.*

The process leading to this new dress code policy began with students who shared their concerns with Woods faculty and administration. The high school Student Council then conducted a student survey. The main concerns regarding the current dress code were:

- the language in the code is vague, ambiguous, and open to subjective interpretation,
- the code tends to limit female bodies more than male bodies,
- enforcement is inconsistent,
- the code “sexualizes” bodies, particularly female bodies,
- it leads to body shaming.

The administration brought these concerns to the Woods School Board. The Board Development Committee studied student survey results from both middle and high school students, surveyed faculty, and researched gender inclusive dress codes and legal issues surrounding dress code policies. Taking all of this into account, and working through a lens of gender equity, the committee wrote a new draft proposal, and brought it to the Board in October. After additional discussion, revision, and research, the Board passed the current policy the following month.

Through advisories the week before Winter Break, students and faculty in middle and high school discussed the new dress code, how the code will be enforced, and also learned about the process we followed in developing this policy.

Should you have any questions as you read over the new dress code, please contact your child's division director or the principal with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Collette Drake, Chair
Woods Charter School Board

Current Dress Code

Woods Charter School strives to create an environment that allows for high quality academic and character education to be at the center of our experience. Clothing and accessories should adhere to the standards below.

Woods Charter School has determined that within the context of our K-12 school, the following clothing does not meet community standards:

- Articles that include language or images which are profane, sexually suggestive, drug-or tobacco-oriented, and/or suggest or support violence
- Articles that demean any race, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, physical disability, or intellectual ability
- Clothing that exposes bare midriffs
- Clothing that exposes underwear and/or buttocks
- Extremely tight, revealing, and/or low-cut clothing
- Sunglasses, hats, and hoods inside the school building. (This prohibition shall not apply to any individual student when the article is necessary for medical or religious reasons.)

Woods Charter School has determined that within the context of our K-12 school, the following clothing is in compliance:

- Sunglasses & hats outside the school building athletic
- Athletic shoes are required for physical education classes and may be either worn to school or worn only for P.E. class. For purposes of this section, the Elementary Walking Program shall be considered a P.E. class.

New Dress Code (takes effect January 2, 2023)

The goal of the Woods Charter School dress code is to create a safe and affirming environment for all students and faculty.

As a general guideline, students must wear clothing which includes:

- a shirt (defined as having fabric in the front, back, and sides under the arms), **and**
- pants or skirt (or the equivalent), **and**
- shoes.

Certain body parts, including genitals, buttocks, and breasts must be covered with opaque fabric for all students at all times while at school or during school sponsored events or activities.

Students are prohibited from wearing:

- articles with offensive images or language that:
 - o denote, suggest, display, or reference alcohol, drugs, or related paraphernalia or other illegal conduct or activities that reasonably can be construed as racist, lewd, vulgar, obscene, or violent.
 - o demean any race, ethnicity, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, physical disability, or intellectual ability.
- clothing that reveals visible undergarments (excluding underwear waistbands or bra straps worn underneath clothing).

Inside the school building, headwear and sunglasses that obscure the face may not be worn unless for religious observance or medical reasons.

Athletic shoes are required for physical education classes and may be either worn to school or worn only for P.E. class or the Elementary Walking Program.

To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and in a manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body type/size.

For potentially sensitive topics, discussions with students regarding a potential dress code violation shall occur with another adult staff member present and not in front of other students.