

Metuchen High School Student Dress Expectations

Purpose & Commitment

Metuchen High School's student dress expectations support equitable educational access for all students. Responsibility for attire rests with students and their parents/guardians. The school will enforce these expectations consistently and equitably, so it does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression based on race, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size. Metuchen High School affirms its commitment to affirmative action, inclusion, and accessible remedies for concerns.

Students MUST wear

- Clothing that fully covers genitals, buttocks, breasts, and nipples with opaque fabric at all times.
- At minimum: a shirt (or equivalent top), pants or equivalent bottom (shorts, skirt, dress, etc.), and appropriate footwear.
- Required safety or course-specific items when instructed (e.g., lab coats, goggles, athletic shoes).
- Communicated event or uniform attire when representing the school.

Students MAY wear

- Clothing expressing personal, cultural, religious, or gender identity (including required head coverings). Reasonable accommodation will be made for safety conflicts.
- Visible undergarment straps beneath an opaque top.
- Comfortable, appropriate styles that meet coverage and safety requirements.
- School-provided alternatives when offered to prevent exclusion.
- Special-event or spirit clothing on administratively announced free-expression days (safety rules still apply).

Students CANNOT wear

- Items that reveal genitalia, buttocks, breasts, or nipples.
- Violent imagery, hate speech, profanity, pornography, or sexually explicit content.
- Depictions or promotions of illegal activity, drugs, alcohol, vaping, or paraphernalia.
- Costumes (unless approved), body armor, tactical gear, gang symbols, or intimidating apparel.
- Clothing that creates a hostile environment toward any protected class.
- Visible undergarments (except straps), swimsuits (unless required for an activity), accessories that could be weapons, or items that obscure the face/ears (except documented religious observance, required PPE, or medical reasons). Hoods worn up in classrooms are not permitted except for documented religious or medical reasons.

Enforcement & Protections

- Staff will enforce the dress expectations privately, respectfully, and consistently. Students must not be shamed in front of others. Prohibited practices include but are not limited to: measuring straps or skirt length publicly; discussing alleged violations in view of peers; accusing students of "distracting" others because of clothing; or referencing a student's body type, cultural identity, gender identity, or other personal traits.
- When a violation occurs, staff will speak privately and offer three options: put on the students' alternative clothing at school; receive school-provided clothing if available; or have a parent/guardian bring alternative clothing.
- The school will monitor enforcement outcomes, provide staff training on equitable enforcement and anti-shaming practices, investigate complaints promptly and confidentially, and take corrective action if disparate impacts are identified.

Representation & Events

- Students representing the school must follow reasonable expectations regarding attire set by the staff member in charge (related to safety, decorum, or professional standards).
- Students must meet this dress expectation to attend or participate in school-related functions (field trips, dances, after-school activities); exclusions for noncompliance will follow private, non-shaming procedures.
- The principal (or designee) may waive portions of the dress expectation for administratively announced free-expression days; safety and non-discrimination principles remain in effect.

Support & Contact

- If a student lacks appropriate attire, staff will provide alternatives, so enforcement is not a barrier to attendance.
- For questions, accommodation requests, or concerns about enforcement (including discriminatory or shaming treatment), contact the principal (or designee).

These expectations apply to regular school days, afternoon and evening events, and all school-sponsored events.