



Dress Code Guiding Principles

(2016-2017 School Year)

The Dress Code helps students develop cultural skills and values consistent with the School's mission. These skills and values guide students to make thoughtful choices in dressing appropriately for school activities, and embody empathy when perceiving how others dress. The guiding principles help us pursue these goals.

Curricular

How we dress is a form of social communication. By learning this form of communication, students develop personal identity and responsibility, as well as awareness of their impact on, and interdependence with, the larger community. As with any topic, growth requires learning from mistakes. Thus, absent willful disobedience, Dress Code missteps are treated as teachable moments rather than disciplinary offenses. To assist this process, each student should keep at school a weather-appropriate (i.e., not shorts in January) code-compliant change of clothes. Twice a year (Thanksgiving and spring break), these clothes will be sent home to be exchanged for a weather-appropriate set. A student found to be out of Dress Code will be asked to use their change of clothes (which should be replaced the following school day). At St. Michael's, parents/guardians are partners in the educational process. Thus, the School will communicate with a student's family when a Dress Code mistake has been made, while families are expected to support the Dress Code.

Developmentally Appropriate

Kindergarteners and eighth graders have different needs and skills. This is true academically, physically and socially-emotionally. The Dress Code recognizes this by adjusting expectations and privileges as students grow.

Equitable

In keeping with St. Michael's identity as an inclusive, co-ed school, the Dress Code is equitable to students across gender, race-ethnicity, body type, religion, and socioeconomic status. No aspect of the Dress Code should infringe on a student's physical, cultural, or spiritual needs. Anyone feeling an aspect of the Dress Code is not equitable is welcome to share this with the administration.

Manageable & Current

While the Dress Code is curricular, it takes a backseat to the academic curriculum. Thus, it should be as easy as possible for students to execute and faculty to monitor consistently. In order to ensure this as well as reflect what is available and affordable to families (noting some "fashionable" styles will not be appropriate for school), the Dress Code is regularly reviewed by the faculty. In early spring, proposed changes for the following school year are circulated to the community for comment, allowing ample time for purchase of clothing.

When Principles Collide

In instances when guiding principles are at odds with each other, the School seeks to balance the principles as best it can. For instance, pursuing the curricular goal of setting an appropriately high standard of dress for students by requiring collared shirts may conflict with the manageability and "currentness" principle because many (perhaps a majority) of the seemingly school-appropriate shirts found in the girls section of a store might not have a collar. This is generally not the case in stores' boys sections. Thus, the collar requirement is removed for girls to prevent placing an undue burden on families shopping for school-appropriate clothing for girls.