

## ***SunRidge School Expectations for Student Dress***

*Revised 9/18*

SunRidge School strives to offer an educational environment that promotes academic achievement while it serves the healthy social and emotional development of every child. We believe it is important that the clothing of our students supports this purpose and does not distract from it. A dress code should also be simple enough for everyone to understand and remember so that both following and enforcing it are relatively easy.

The desire for individuality in clothing and adornment is strong in modern culture and seeps down to the youngest ages due to the effectiveness of advertising. Yet within our school, the unfolding of each child's individuality is best marked by the students' work, their relations with others, and their inner feelings of value and belonging. It is children's humanness and sense of intrinsic worth that needs development, not their responsiveness to advertising, slogans, sports allegiances, and the latest material attraction.

While individuality and uniqueness in clothing can be a positive form of self-expression, in a school, clothing fads, precocious behavior, and self-absorption contribute to competitiveness, cliques, and conflicts between students, and between students and teachers (and at home between children and their parents). In the interest of attracting the young mind, much of today's clothing is also overlaid with images that in a classroom can be distracting, and sometimes disturbing. While not all clothing images are negative or unpleasant, we help students focus and learn by minimizing distractions that do not support the learning environment or run counter to the values we are striving to develop. Keeping the rules simple also makes them easier for students, parents, and teachers to understand, thereby minimizing differences of interpretation, debate, and inconsistent application.

As a K-8 school, we must also be sensitive to the impact that the behavior and dress of our older students has on the younger ones. There is plenty of time outside of school, and after elementary school, for the expression of individual interests and tastes in clothing and appearance; we do children, parents, and teachers a favor by making choices in school clothing and appearance simple and free from debate.

### **Images & Writing on Clothing, Backpacks, Lunch bags, etc**

The following are mandatory:

- Clothing or accessories with any images, wording, symbols, or references to drugs, alcohol, violence, or any form of prejudice or put down of others is prohibited
- Shoes and clothing must allow for safe, active movement during the school day. Shoes must be secured to the feet (no "flip-flops" or other loose-heeled type sandals).
- Clothing should cover the midriff and undergarments.
- Shirts/tops must be worn at all times.
- Shorts and skirts/dresses should be at least mid-thigh length.
- Shirts/tops should stay securely on the shoulders, with straps at least 1 inch wide, and with necklines and sleeve holes that keep the chest covered. 6-8th grade students may wear ripped jeans with holes that are below mid-thigh.
- No brimmed hats or hoods may be worn in the classrooms except for warmth in cold weather, and at the discretion of the teacher.
- No extremely oversized clothing or clothing with rips or holes.

In addition to these prohibitions, our teachers strongly request that parents support what they are doing in the classroom by having students wear clothing and accessories that have no media or advertising images, logos, symbols or words of any kind (SunRidge shirts are excepted). Simple, solid color clothing free of such images and words creates a school environment most free of distractions and supportive of your teacher’s work with the children.

## **Other Guidelines**

### **Make-up, Nail Polish, Appearance**

**Grades K-5:** Children in grade K-5 are expected to come to school free of make-up or nail polish. Perfume and other scents are discouraged in all classes due to possible allergies some may have to these products.

**Grades 6-8:** We request that parents of students in grade 6-8 not allow their children to adorn themselves with heavy makeup, bright nail polish, body piercings other than ears, extreme hair cuts, tattoos, etc. Young adolescents are searching for meaning and individuality—we need to guide them to find it within themselves and in what they do in the world around them, not in a materialistic focus on “image.” Early adolescent pressure for adult-type experimentation in personal expression with one’s body is best held off until the high school years.

### **Hair Dyeing**

**Grades K-5:** Children are expected to come to school with their natural hair color.

**Grades 6-8:** Please, no extreme hair colors. We discourage hair dyeing, but any hair dyeing should be natural colors and/or subtle.

### **Jewelry**

In general, jewelry must not present a safety concern given the active nature of some school activities (e.g., no hoops or dangling earrings). Jewelry design must also conform to the guidelines for clothing, backpacks, etc., and not present a distraction to the educational focus of the school environment. Additional restrictions, based on developmental concerns, may be requested by teachers in discussion with the parents of their students.

These dress and appearance guidelines may not cover all situations. The general rule is that a student’s clothing and grooming should be appropriate to a K-8 school setting, and be conducive to the educational purposes and activities of the school. Teachers and other school staff have the right to ascertain when clothing or appearance is unacceptable, even if the specific attire is not mentioned in these guidelines.

Students not adhering to these guidelines will be given other clothing to wear (if available) for the rest of the day. If necessary, parents will be called to assist their child in meeting the dress code.

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