

# Merit Academy Uniform Policy

Updated: 09/10/2023

## Purpose of Uniforms

There is a strong correlation between student appearance and perception of excellence.

Additional reasons for the uniform dress code include:

- Foster a distinct and positive Merit Academy appearance
- Decrease distractions
- Increase commitment to MA's core values and beliefs.
- Discourage divisiveness or cliques and encourage core cohesion and respect
- Increase student parity

## Why the uniform Policy will be enforced

- Here at Merit Academy, rules are put in place to be followed.
- Teaching our students to adhere to the rules, set by their authority, prepares them for the workforce.
- While we encourage students to ask the “why” and understand why they are being asked to follow certain rules; we do ask that they follow these rules and expectations while asking “why”. They will be expected to follow the rules if they disagree with the “why”.
- Allowing students to break and bend rules fosters a sense of entitlement and disrespect of authority. Something we do not tolerate at Merit Academy.

# Overall Uniform Guidelines

## UNIFORM/DRESS CODE GUIDELINES

**\*\* We expect cheerful, consistent commitment to the dress code policy from all students, parents, and staff. This is designed to promote our focus on academics and group solidarity. \*\***

UNDERCLOTHING Always worn, never seen

SOCKS/TIGHTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leggings may not be worn in place of slacks, but may be worn under skirts</li> <li>Black, White, Navy preferred, but bold/bright/patterned socks/tights are acceptable</li> <li>No unwholesome phrases/visuals</li> </ul>
TOPS/SHIRTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Polos must be long enough to be tucked, but do not need to be tucked. Oxford and dress shirts must be tucked in</li> <li>Solid colors (red, white, navy blue, black) (black is an option for School of Rhetoric students)</li> <li>Polo, oxford shirts; cardigans, turtle/mock turtle necks, sweater vests, sweaters (see Gap/Old Navy/Child's Place for uniform tops)</li> <li>Merit Academy hoodies</li> <li>Local club or team hoodies or polos for whom the Merit student participates are permitted on the day of/before (if on a weekend) an event</li> </ul>
PANTS/SHORTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must fit the student (not overly tight, not overly baggy)</li> <li>Longer than fingertip length</li> <li>Khakis and slacks</li> <li>Solid colors (red, navy blue, black, khaki/tan)</li> <li>Jeans (darker color, black or solid color blue denims are acceptable)</li> <li>Not acceptable:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sweatpants/athletic wear (can be worn for PE)</li> <li>Leggings, unless worn under skirt, see socks/tights for guidelines</li> <li>No pants/shorts with holes, rips, frays, decorations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
SKIRTS/SKORTS/ DRESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hem must be longer than fingertip length</li> <li>Solid colors (red, navy blue, black, khaki/tan)</li> <li>Cartwheel/bike shorts, leggings, tights to be worn under shorter (fingertip length) skirts/dresses</li> <li>Dresses must be polo-type, uniform layered, or sweater dresses, except on special occasion. No strapless, spaghetti strap dresses. Must adhere to above guidelines, colors, etc.</li> <li>Skirts/dresses may also be Red/Navy plaid only from French Toast</li> </ul>
SHOES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No shoes with wheels</li> <li>No flipflops</li> <li>Snowboots permitted, but must be worn only when outside (recess, lunch, etc.) Please bring indoor shoes to wear during winter months</li> <li>Heels must be 2" or less</li> </ul>

***Clothing should fit the student but not be tight or overly form fitting (including dresses, skirts, shorts, pants, tops, etc). Crop tops, off the shoulder tops, spaghetti straps, see-through material, low cut tops or similar types of clothing are not permitted. Our goal is modesty: promoting attention on excellence of academics and conduct.***

# Examples of Uniforms

Example approved uniform clothing (not all inclusive, but for ideas):



## NEW APPROVED UNIFORM OPTION

Navy, for ALL students.

For SOR: Navy or Black!



# Outerwear

## NOT approved for IN CLASS

Our students can wear any outerwear they would like *outside* the classroom. They can not wear non-uniform clothing in the classroom. This includes but is not limited to:

- Hoodies that are not uniform approved (see below)
- Zip up hoodies are outerwear; must wear uniform approved shirt underneath
- Heavy winter coats
- Gloves, scarves
- Snow bibs
- Rain coats
- Snow boots, and Rain Boots

## Approved for IN CLASS

- ONLY the following Merit Hoodie in **RED, NAVY, or WHITE** are approved to wear IN the building and classroom. NO OTHER HOODIES ARE ALLOWED IN THE CLASSROOM!
- SOR may wear these hoodies in BLACK as well.
- You may not wear hoods in the building.
- For warmth in the classroom, students are encouraged to layer with uniforms on top. Long sleeved polos, long sleeves under polos, approved sweaters (see above) are all other ways students can keep warm in class.



## FRIDAY- HOUSE DAY COLORS!

We LOVE to see our students celebrate and take pride in their houses by wearing house colors. For this reason, we have house color days! Here are a few guidelines for uniforms on Fridays.

- EVERY Friday is “house color day”- ***THIS IS NOT A FREE DRESS DAY!***
- Your TOP must be the color of your house:
  - Elk- Green
  - Wolf- Yellow
  - Big Horn- Purple
  - Bobcat- Orange
  - Falcon- Blue
  - *We do not have maroon, black, pink, gray, white, etc. house colors, so your students should not be wearing these colors.*
- Your shirt does NOT have to be a solid color, but it must be the obvious and most prominent color of the shirt.
- NO inappropriate language or unwholesome visuals or phrases may be worn.
- If you choose to wear a hoodie inside the building, it must be the color of your HOUSE or an approved MERIT hoodie (see above).
- All bottoms must still be uniform.
  - NO ripped jeans, leggings as pants, sweatpants, all shorts/ skirts are fingertip length.
  - Jeans, khakis, khaki/jean/navy shorts are all acceptable
- You can also choose to wear a typical Merit Uniform as well.

## Uniform Exchange

We know that buying uniforms can become costly, especially for those with multiple children in school. For this reason, we will offer a uniform exchange at least once a year. If you are still having trouble purchasing uniforms, please reach out to our admin as we may have resources available to you.

## FAQs:

***“We have a couple polos in the correct color but they have a little logo at the top of the shirt, is that ok?”***

- Yes! A small logo in the top corner of the shirt is acceptable. It should not be larger than a typical logo. Examples: the UA from UnderArmour shirts, the little GAP bear, the Ralph Lauren Polo horse are all ok!

***“What can my child wear for PE?”***

- right now, our students do not have the space or the time to change for PE. Please send them to school with the appropriate UNIFORM clothing and footwear on days they have PE. Girls: shorts under skirts and dresses are required.

***“I found a lot of cool Merit designs on the SpiritWear website you posted. Can my child wear those?”***

- YES, they can wear them outside of the building, to and from school. They should also wear them out in the community to support our school and show Merit Bear Pride!

- but NO, they can NOT wear them in class. Only the APPROVED hoodie above is allowed in class.

***“My student said they can wear whatever they want on Friday as long as it’s the color of their house?”***

- **NO**- this is not the case. They need to be in UNIFORM bottoms (NO leggings, ripped jeans, sweatpants or house color pants).
- The tops need to be modest in that they are NOT midriff, spaghetti straps, form fitting or low cut.
- Hoodies need to be the HOUSE color OR a Merit Approved hoodie (see above)

***“I can’t find a top in my student’s house color so can they wear a color that is close?”***

- Not really. The only variance we have on colors is “light and dark”. Examples: Light/dark purple are ok for Big Horn house, but fuschia/ pink is not. Light/ Dark blue is ok for Falcon house, but teal is not.

***“My daughter has long arms, do her skirts and shorts really have to be fingertip length?”***

- Yes. All the time, even on Fridays.

***“Will there ever be ‘dress down’ or ‘out of uniform days’.”***

- While this doesn't happen often, it doesn't happen occasionally. Be on the lookout for teacher communication for these fun days!

***"The policy says, "dark jeans". What exactly does this mean?"***

- The policy does say "darker jeans" but also goes on to say that solid blue and black denim is acceptable. If they are light blue *denim*, they are acceptable. Light any other color denim– not acceptable.

***"What is the policy on leggings?"***

- Saying that students cannot wear leggings is not entirely accurate.
- They cannot wear leggings as pants.
- Leggings must be worn under skirts or dresses only!
- Leggings can be any pattern or color. This is where your girls can show their creativity.

***"My student got a rip in their jeans while they were at school! Should I send a pair of new jeans in case this happens again?"***

- No, it's ok to have them finish out the day in jeans that accidentally got ripped while at school. Just retire those jeans as "play jeans" from now on.

***"What shoes can my students wear?"***

- This one is answered better by what can the NOT wear
  - No wheels in shoes
  - No heels more than 2"
  - No flip flops
  - No snow boots or rain boots in the classroom