

Dress standards

Rev. 8/1/2013b

Through appropriate clothing choices, a student will practice honoring others. He or she will seek to demonstrate modesty, professionalism, gratitude, submission to authority, and respect for the institution and community.

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Gal. 5.13-14

Important note: *If you turned to this policy first, or before reading other significant preceding ones, you testify to the power of clothing in today's culture. Some will turn here to see how much freedom they have, fearful they might have to surrender much in personal expression. Conversely, others will search the guidelines because it's important for them to know if others will be appropriately limited, so their family's convictions regarding modesty and dress will not be offended. Because the potential for divisiveness and misunderstanding related to this singular issue is high, extra space and explanation about dress are afforded here (and in the appendixes) to maximize the opportunity to encourage unity and community.*

Some of these principles are duplicated from those introduced in the "Character Development" section. They are repeated here since the dress standards section will be available as a stand-alone pamphlet and the principles are referenced.

Principles: Student dress will display:

- A professional appearance that denotes gratitude and respect for his or her occupation as a student
- An understanding and appreciation of personal modesty
- A willingness to honor others and to submit to their needs as more important than self
- A tangible display of obedience to authority through the conservative keeping of the spirit of the guidelines

Scriptural basis: For blessings and peace, believers are called to:

- Admit ownership of our bodies (and coverings) belongs to God and His instructions (1 Cor. 6:20 and 7:23)
- Seek modesty and propriety, not as pagans seeking to push the envelope (1 Pet. 3:3-4; 1 Tim. 2:9)
- Not be overly concerned about clothing and physical appearance (Luke 12:27-28)
- Honor others more than self. Submit to those weaker, not causing them to stumble; (1 Cor. 10:31-33; Ro. 12:10, Ro. 14:20)
- Recognize the opportunity to be "faithful in small matters" (Luke 16:10)
- Wholeheartedly submit to authority and community, knowing it is Jesus who is really served (Eph. 6:5-8)
- Realize the issue is so much greater than "mere clothes" -- that all issues are heart issues. (Prov. 4:23)

Introduction: clothing is just a cover up

The guidelines below cannot satisfy everyone's personal convictions or desires. That is not their purpose. Rather, their goal is to acknowledge the diverse range among personal, denominational, and cultural norms, and to create a uniform range that seeks respectful compromise. As the Apostle Paul repeatedly communicated to the Corinthians, disputes about clothing or food, etc. are not the important issue, but just a cover-up for the real issue: the person's heart motives and love for others.

The dress standards are intended to give a practical witness to LPA's purpose to honor God and to biblically train students. Willing obedience to the spirit of the dress standards is a condition of the privilege of being an enrolled student, of being on campus, and of involvement in school activities.

Dress standard details

Interpretation: professionalism and modesty

- The administration reserves the right to determine what is appropriate LPA dress, relative to the standards.
- When any question exists about appropriate dress or its interpretation, the student or parent should proactively seek counsel from an administrative leader. Wearing questionable items without first asking, forcing staff to react and comment after the fact, can be perceived as presumptive, confrontational or haughty.

General: professionalism and modesty

- As an overarching guideline, attire should focus others' attention upon a person's face, which is man's glory.
- The occupation of student is an active one. Students participate in a wide range of indoor and outdoor tasks and situations, including bending, reaching, stooping, lifting, carrying, and sitting on the floor, etc. Clothing choices should reflect this need for multi-purpose garments that provide both comfort and modesty in all situations. Student attire will not be considered a valid excuse for not fully participating in any teacher or staff-organized activity.
- Clothing will be neat, clean, and free from holes, rips, handwriting, or conspicuous stains.
- Attire will avoid being overly casual. For example, pajama bottoms, sweatpants, and slippers are inappropriate.
- Clothing must be opaque. Any less-than-opaque accessories shall be layered over outer garments.
- No part of underwear, including straps should be visible. Retail stores label it "intimate apparel" for a reason.
- Clothing should be the person's appropriate size, neither fitting excessively tightly nor too loosely, to avoid an immodest design or a safety hazard.
 - Excessively tight clothing is that which reveals more about body features than is appropriate, due to tight tailoring, elastic content, etc. As a simple guideline for appropriate fit, a parent should be able to easily gather a section of the fabric in his or her fingers. Examples of inappropriate wear would include extremely form-fitting jeans or active wear, bicycle shorts, and tights worn as an outer garment.
 - Overly loose or flimsy garments pose their own issues. Garments should not allow immodest revealing through gapping, floating, and slipping, nor should their looseness cause safety issues by dragging or catching.
- Students shall dress traditionally according to their gender.
- Imprinted clothing is a method of speech, and therefore should contain wording or images that are positive, wholesome, and edifying -- and which do not conflict with LPA's mission. Imprints may not be positioned to inappropriately draw the eye to specific body parts.
- One's appearance should not draw undue attention by being overly flashy or gaudy, distracting from the learning and community focus.
- Primary daily grooming is to be done at home, and so related materials such as hair curlers or combs left in the hair are inappropriate. Any light grooming, such as brushing hair and touching-up make-up is to be done in the restroom, and not anywhere else inside the buildings.
- Temperatures inside facilities can vary by day and by room, and students also often participate in unannounced outdoor activities. The student is responsible for considering appropriate layers for personal comfort and utility.
- Students anywhere on campus or at off-campus LPA activities must be dressed according to the standards at all times and in all places unless given clear instructions otherwise. Athletes and P.E. activity students may change into LPA athletic gear immediately before their activity.

Tops: Shirts, blouses, etc.

- All tops must have sleeves.
- All tops are required to extend far enough below the beltline – or to be tucked in -- so there is no midriff or lower back skin exposed at any point of a student's extended movement or posture.
- Shirt tails for males should not extend past the bottom of normal pants hip pocket.
- The tailoring of ladies' tops should feature modest necklines so cleavage is not exposed.
- Gentlemen shall wear shirts in the presence or possible presence of females, even in athletic activities.

Bottoms: Pants, shorts, skirts, and dresses

- Bottom garments should not drag the floor
- Bottom garments must be worn above the hips, and when loose they must be fastened with a belt or suspenders.
- Ladies are expected to choose modest dresses, skirts, and "skorts." The minimum length of these is "at the knee," regardless of tights or other garments underneath. Because of differing styles, body types, and the constant growth of young people, an acceptable range is within three inches of the kneecap. The intention of this allowance is that the garment be at or near the knee and not riding up the thigh. This allowance is meant as maximum grace and not to become a new standard, from which students seek further grace to exceed.
- Shorts may be worn by both genders if they honor the "at the knee" length and allowance as described above, and if they are constructed of reasonably thick material. Lightweight thickness such as in running shorts is inappropriate.

Elementary considerations

- The rate and proportion of body growth in elementary girls can challenge garment measurements. Through grade 6, young ladies may follow a "fingertip" guideline for shorts, whereby the length of the shorts should be at least at or below her fingertips when her hands are allowed to hang naturally by her side.
- Due to active play, activities, and floor seating, girls in K5-2nd shall wear modesty shorts under dresses and skirts.

Footwear: Shoes and sandals

- For safety, footwear must be worn at all times on campus and at school activities.
- Elementary students must wear shoes that tightly surround the heel. Strapped river sandals, etc. are acceptable.
- Secondary students may wear shoes that do not enclose the heel.
- Since high heels are not conducive to campus conditions and activities, two inches is maximum heel height.
- Shoes with fasteners, such as shoestrings, straps, Velcro, etc., must be fastened at all times.
- Rubber, non-slip soles are urged, as tile and vinyl floors on campus can be slippery in both wet and dry conditions.

Headwear: Hair and head accessories

- Hair shall be clean, neatly styled, and kept out of the eyes at all times -- to encourage eye-to-eye communication.
- Hairstyles that call undue attention to an individual student are immodest, and therefore inappropriate. Hair should be of reasonably conservative coloring and cut. The time to ask about acceptability is before the styling or dying.
- Appropriate head coverings and hats are welcome outdoors, but are not to be worn in the campus buildings. This includes hats, caps, visors, sweatbands, head scarves, bandanas, etc.
- Ear buds, head phones, etc. are inappropriate to community goals, communicating "I'm not listening or available"

Eyewear: Glasses and lenses

- Since the eye is the lamp of the body (Mt. 6:22-23), and because eyeball-to-eyeball communication is vital to the human connection sought in LPA's community, no eyewear should interfere with seeing one's eyes.
- Clear, vision-correcting lenses are the only glasses to be worn indoors, except for medically-documented and administration-approved reasons.
- Students may wear sunglasses/tinted lenses outside, but are to remove them, if asked, for conversation purposes.

Accessories: Stylish but non-essential

- A young lady's use of cosmetics is a parent decision; however, make-up should be worn in conservative amounts and application

- Accessories should be limited and conservative in both appearance and size.
- For safety, items such as overly long or tight necklaces, clothes or wallet chains, spiked bands, etc., are not allowed.
- To maximize safety, teachers and coaches may require jewelry and accessory removal during specific activities.

Exceptions: Special dress-related instances

- At administrative discretion, dress exceptions may be made for a student's legitimate faith or medical reasons.
- Students may be allowed or required to meet different dress standards for certain LPA-related activities, such as activities and athletic events sponsored by associations, sports leagues, etc. Likewise, the hosts/operators of field trips and events may have unique requirements. In cases of special dress requirements, the event leader will notify all participants in advance. Honoring the dress standards of the host or organizer is a requirement for participation.
- The administration may grant limited dress variance for special purposes, provided that high standards of modesty are always upheld. These might include special dress-up / spirit days, fine arts /drama events, and work days
- Sports team members and physical education (P.E.) students may have acceptably different dress parameters, as stated in the athletics manual and/or communicated as by the athletic director through the coaches. Athletic wear is modest, compared to the world's sports standards, but its acceptability in sporting events is not to be interpreted as permission to wear the articles to school or other events outside their game or practice use unless they satisfy the normal dress standards.
- Any dress variance extended exclusively for specific instances is not to be interpreted as any other open permission.

Counsel and enforcement

As supported by Second Peter chapter 2 and Galatians chapter 5, the dress standards provide the student an opportunity to demonstrate biblical obedience to honor authority and others. Experience suggests that many students will engage this opportunity in one of two broad ways:

- A student who embraces this opportunity will respond from a thoughtful, conservative stance, safely inside the bounds of the guidelines – perhaps with some additional margin, so as not to offend.
- The student who struggles with and perhaps even resists this opportunity will do so from a rebellious, careless, or selfish position, seeking to carry his or her own wishes as close to the line as possible -- even crossing it -- while still wanting to claim "enough compliance" so as not to be "in trouble."

Students who violate the dress standards will be referred to an administrative staff member, who will seek to evaluate both the dress concern and the student's attitude about it. In questionable instances, the school administration will determine the appropriateness of a given student's appearance and his or her attempt to comply, according to the guidelines.

Violations will therefore be treated as character development opportunities. The administration will maintain a wide range of possible disciplinary options, in order to appropriately respond to the seriousness of the incident, the student's responsive attitude, and the frequency of a student's issues relative to dress and other standards.

Elementary: The normal procedure will be for a staff member to discuss the matter with a parent, so that the parent may address the questionable area of appearance with the student and translate the reasons to him or her

Secondary: A staff member, normally an administrative member and not a teacher, usually counsels the student on his or her appearance. Depending upon significance, the staff member will then contact the parent as necessary.

The staff member may pursue one or more of the following options:

- Confer with the student for clarification purposes (preferably with a same-gender staff member)
- Direct the student to remove or replace the non-conforming item
- Request the student to change into school-issued clothing
- Have the student phone home to ask a parent to deliver replacement clothes
- Phone the parent to pick up the student