

Comparing High School and College Dress Codes

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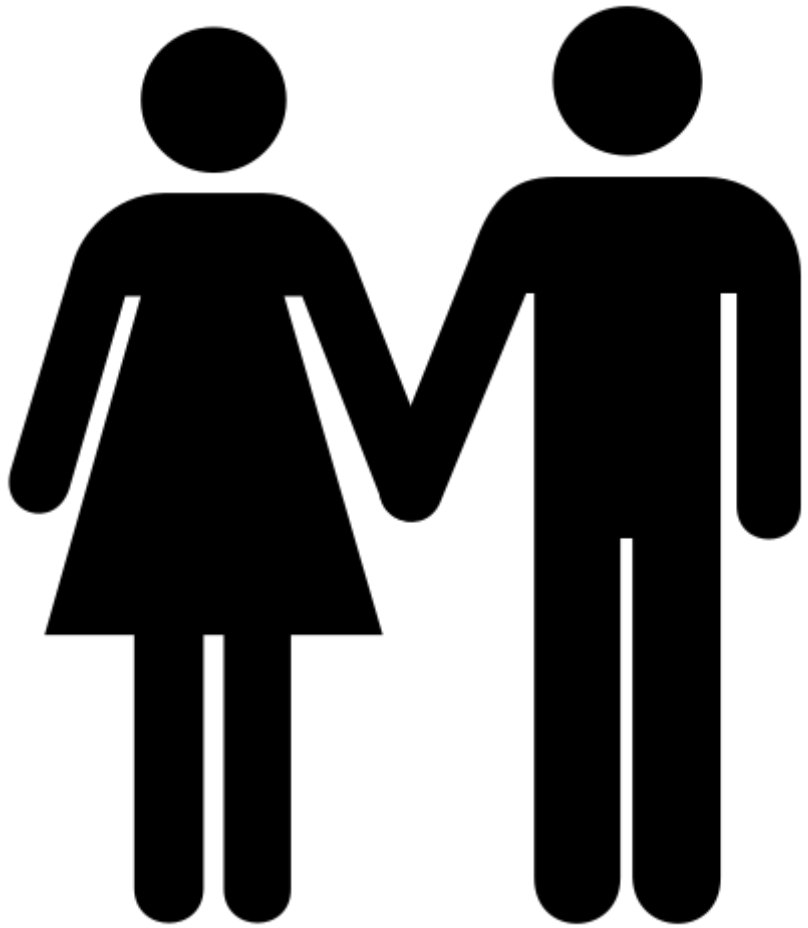
Fall 2021 Undergraduate Research Project

SLS 1101: Success Strategies for College and Life

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Introduction

Why are dress codes important in high school, and what strategy can high school students use to learn dress codes at their high schools?

The comparison of high school to college dress codes interests us because dual-enrolled students experience both school environments with a dress code. In college there are fewer rules and restrictions on the way students dress, so long as they are covered up. While in high school dress codes are more restricted and social pressure has a large effect on students to dress a certain way.

Background

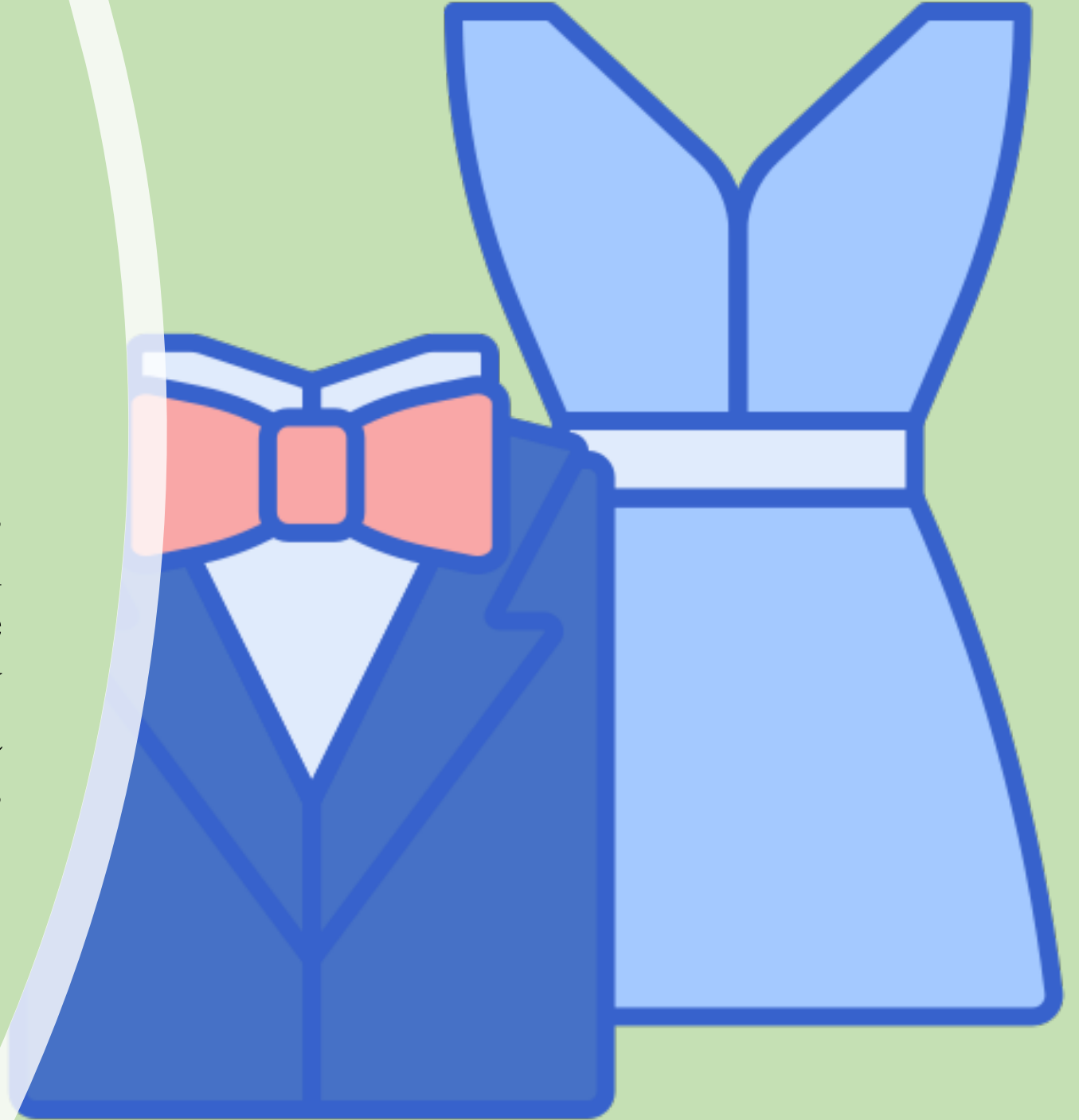
Research by Sequeira, Mendonca, and Mehendra (2014) found that dress codes which required wearing a uniform was helpful to build discipline, and decrease discrimination levels between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. We used this research as a basis to study the dress code policies between a high school and a state college.

Each high school and college have different dress codes, and each school's administration enforces the dress codes. In high school there are many rules about the length of skirts and shirts. There is normally a list of specific rules on which students can or cannot wear, but with college, there is normally not a list of specific garments that are off limits to students. In college, students are able to wear what they want as long as they are covering themselves appropriately.

A problem we noticed with the dress code in high school is that administration monitors the choice of clothes daily for students and continues to pull anyone who does not follow it exactly out of class to give them their punishment. There are benefits to following school dress codes like learning to dress professionally, and limiting gang affiliation with clothing items like t-shirts, but the advantages slowly go away when administration makes the way students dress more important than the learning in school (Regoli, 2019).

Methods of Examining Dress Code

In order to examine the differences between college and high school dress codes, we decided to pull the set dress codes from Brevard county high schools and Eastern Florida State College. The next two slides are copies of the dress codes.



EFSC Dress Code

Student Code of Conduct Code 17 Dress and Appearance states, “Students are expected to maintain standards of personal appearance and dress which are conducive and appropriate to the maintenance of health, welfare and safety for themselves and their associates in the community. Dress worn by students must be of sufficient quality and quantity to properly cover and protect the body, including shirt and shoes.”

Students who break the dress code experience a level of disciplinary sanctions related to violations of the Code of Conduct include, but are not limited to: verbal/written warning, disciplinary censure, disciplinary probation, final disciplinary probation, suspension, and/or expulsion.



Brevard County High School Dress Codes

1. No hats, curlers, bandanas, or sunglasses (unless prescribed by a physician) are to be worn in the school building or hallways. Hats must be placed either in the student's locker or book bag when the first bell rings. The hat must remain there until the end of the school day bell. Sunglasses cannot be worn in the classroom unless prescribed by a physician.
2. Extreme hairstyles, hair colors, or make-up that is disruptive or does not allow direct eye contact is prohibited.
3. Garments must be of a length and fit that are suitable to the build and stature of the student.
4. The cut of sleeveless garments must not expose undergarments or be otherwise immodest.
5. Strapless Garments are prohibited. Straps of permitted garments must be of 2 inches in width. (Tube tops and halter-tops are prohibited.)
6. Necklines of all upper garments must be modest. Low cut necklines are prohibited.
7. Excessively large or baggy clothes, which may conceal dangerous items or be a safety hazard, shall not be worn.
8. Upper garments must adequately cover the waistline and must not expose the midriff while the students performing normal school-related activities (studying, retrieving books, raising hands, etc.).
9. Pajama tops are not permitted. Pajama bottoms are not permitted.
10. Pants shall conform to the build and stature of the student; shall be worn at the waist; and shall not extend below the heel of the shoe in length. Pants shall have no holes or rips.
11. Undergarments shall not be visible. (Sports bras are considered undergarments.)
12. Dresses and skirts must reach mid-thigh. Slits in skirts or dresses may not reach above mid-thigh.
13. Shorts must have clearly discernible inseams of reasonable length and cover the buttocks. Short shorts are prohibited. Garments must be of a length and fit that are suitable to the build and stature of the student.
14. Students in grades 7-12 may wear footwear commonly considered as beachwear (for example, flip-flops, thongs, etc.) unless a course of instruction requires them to wear safe and appropriate footwear to protect the student from injury i.e., athletic shoes in physical education classes. Slippers are not permitted.
15. Clothing, jewelry and accessories shall not convey messages that are crude; vulgar/profane; violent/death-oriented; gang related; sexually suggestive; and/or promoting alcohol, drugs, or tobacco. Pierced jewelry shall be limited to the ear. Dog collars, tongue rings, wallet chains, large hair picks, chains that connect one part of the body to another, or other jewelry/accessories that pose a safety concern for the student or others shall be prohibited. Clear plastic spacers or retainers may be worn in facial piercings. Band-aids cannot cover a piercing.
16. Any clothing, accessories, symbols, or regalia that convey membership or affiliation with a "gang" or other similarly oriented group or association prone to violence or criminal acts is prohibited. Prohibited gang clothing, accessories, or regalia can include, but is not limited to, gang related colors, rolled up bandanas about the head or other parts of the body, knit caps, rolled up or split pant cuffs, certain sports attire that has a "street meaning", etc. Beachwear and see-through or otherwise revealing apparel is not considered appropriate. Students are not permitted to wear clothing which contains vulgar, sexually explicit, or oriented wording/scenes, promotes tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drug use, or contains printed profanity as defined

Why are dress codes important in high school? Administrators seek to build a safe learning environment free from disruptive behaviors and immodest dress. See highlighted words below to describe disruptive behaviors and immodest dress.

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Our Solution: A Help Guide for Dress Code Violations

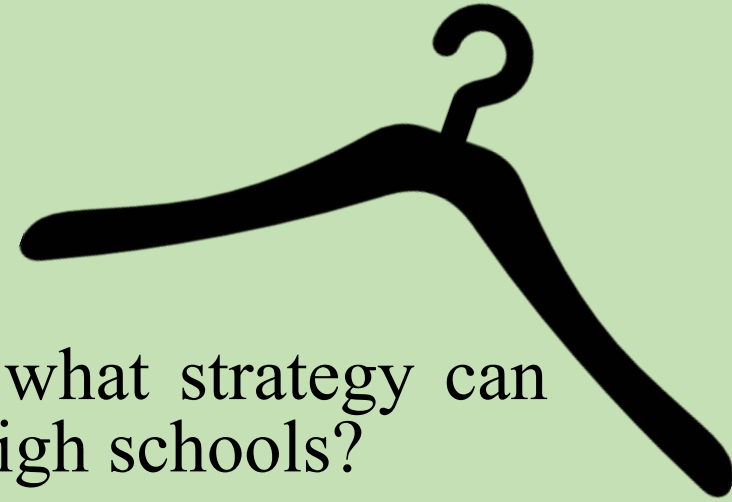
After reviewing the high school dress code and talking over some of the rules we had never heard of, we found that when entering high school, lots of kids don't know every rule there is in the dress code. They receive a planner with the rules in it, but most students do not look at them, and get dress coded without knowing that they were out of dress code to begin with. What strategy can high school students use to learn the dress codes? Our solution to this was to create a sheet for high school students to show the type of clothing items they cannot wear, and what the punishment would be for wearing it.



Clothing Items Consequences

<i>If you wear a hat...</i>	You will get dress coded and your hat will get taken away.
<i>If you dye your hair...</i>	You will have to redye it your natural hair color.
<i>If you wear a top or bottom that shows undergarments...</i>	You will get dress coded and must change your outfit.
<i>If you wear a low-cut shirt...</i>	You will get dress coded and must change your shirt.
<i>If you wear a shirt that exposes the midriff...</i>	You will get dress coded and must change your shirt.
<i>If you wear a pajama top...</i>	You will get dress coded and will need to change your shirt.
<i>If you wear pants with holes or rips...</i>	You will get dress coded and will need to change your pants.
<i>If you wear a dress or skirt that reaches above your mid-thigh...</i>	You will get dress coded and will need to change your outfit.
<i>If you wear a pajama bottom...</i>	You will get dress coded and will need to change your pants.
<i>If you wear slippers...</i>	You will get dress coded and will need to change your shoes.
<i>If you wear any type of garment that convey crude messages...</i>	You will get dress coded and will need to change your clothing and the administration will confiscate the item.
<i>If you have piercings other than on the ear...</i>	You will get dress coded and will need to put a clear plug in the hole.
<i>If you wear a bathing suit...</i>	You will get dress coded and will be sent home.

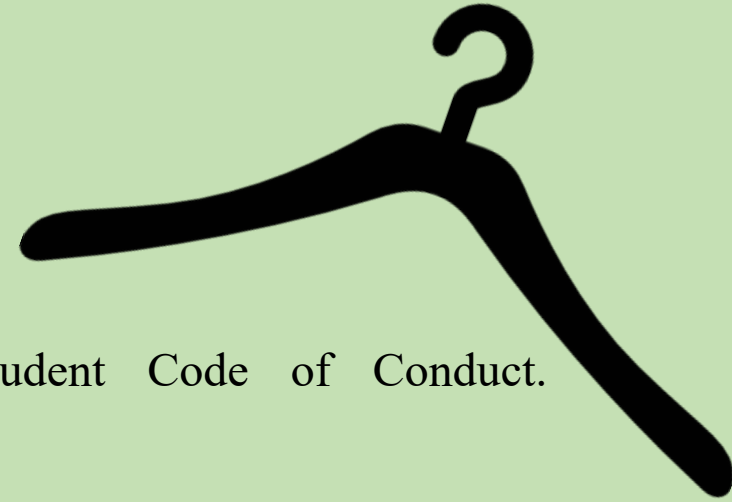
Conclusion



Why are dress codes important in high school, and what strategy can high school students use to learn dress codes at their high schools?

High school dress codes have more restrictions than college dress codes. High school administrators seek to create and guard a learning environment that is safe, free from disruptive behaviors and immodest dress. We propose a help guide to explain the clothing violation and the consequence for high school students. Students can use the help guide in their plan to become more familiar with the dress code to avoid violations. Further study into the ways high school administration informs students about the dress codes may shed more light on why students do not really know the dress codes and keep getting violations.

Works Cited



Eastern Florida State College Catalog 2020-2021. Student Handbook Student Code of Conduct.
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Regoli, N. (2019). 19 School Dress Code Pros and Cons.

Sequeira, A.H. & Mendonca, Claret & K., Mandeep & Mahendra, Kataria & Tiwari, Lakshmi. (2014). A Study on Dress Code for College Students. SSRN Electronic Journal. 10.2139/ssrn.2503016.