
Dress Code In Schools As A Female Sexism

In 1630, the Puritans colonized Massachusetts Bay. They were the first to implement a dress code among themselves. "Impure" clothing such as ripped clothing were forbidden. Today, dress codes are built on this anti-democratic foundations. Many believe that dress codes create a safer environment and reduce distractions, but this is false. Dress codes are sexist, vague, regulate students voices and should be changed severely.

First off, dress codes are extremely vague and subjective. Most schools have a dress code rule that reads similarly of that clothing must be "safe, appropriate, and not interfere with or disrupt the educational process." This causes an unfair dress code in which any clothing item could be violating the dress code. For example, one may consider flip-flops to be unsafe while another could disagree all based on their personal beliefs. Other unjust rules are, "apparel that may cause disruption" and "accessories that hide your face may not be worn in school". For the ladder, personally, I have had experience with this. The rule states a hidden face isn't allowed. I admit to wearing a had, but I believe the backwards style in which I was wearing the hat did not hide my face nor violate the rule. Another time, I was wearing a hood on school property, but not inside the school. The rule states such items "may not be worn in school" but I was sent to the office for this also. Cynthia Leung, a student of Lowell High School and the author of the article "The dress code is unfair and vague. Here's how to improve it", when talking about the matter stated, "The district should give examples of violations of the dress code or include images of clothes that violate it or are appropriate for school. Also, the school administration could hold a presentation describing what is appropriate or inappropriate for school and answer questions that students may have" (Leung, 2017). As you can clearly see, many different rules can be defined differently based on a person's personal beliefs and interpretation.

Some claim mere style can't be expressive, but style and fashion are used to express feelings and emotions. Another example of this would be music. Many kids use music to express their emotions and feelings. It is the same with clothing and style. Dress codes restrict students voices. In one case, a school regulated breast cancer awareness bracelets that said, "I ? Boobies". A similar case to this is probably the most infamous case is Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District in 1969. In this case, high school students wore black armbands to school in order to protest the Vietnam War. The school told the students they were not allowed to wear the armbands, suspended them and were told they couldn't return to school until they removed them. The students filed a First Amendment lawsuit. The Supreme Court agreed with the students and said students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate." According to the Middle Tennessee State University, the right to freedom of expression, or expressive conduct, is defined as "behavior designed to convey a message; its function as speech means that it has increasingly been protected by the first amendment." I would have to argue that clothing can be expressive. Fashion is used as an expressive form of social life and in many cases are protected under the first amendment.

It's time to address the elephant in the room. Dress codes are extremely sexist and target females. Schools claim dress codes reduce classroom distraction, but this is extremely one-sided. Sexist dress codes restrict what female students can wear with no benefit. A survey with

an estimate of around 10,000 people surveyed had 64.8% of people on the side claiming dress codes are sexist. A distraction is construction noise, being hungry in class, a student continually talking or tapping their pen, or needing to go to the restroom. A girls body and clothes aren't. Regulating a girls body often sexualizes them more.

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