

# Why we need dress codes, argumentative mla. essay

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Dress codes in public schools would be good, in order to cut down the violence, which would eliminate the problems of wearing hats or jackets that could carry weapons to school.

Every school should adopt some kind of dress code so it will cut down some of the everyday problems that schools deal with today. Problems such as violence and substance abuse are on the rise in schools. Dress codes would decrease the amount of violence and substance abuse in schools. David Brunets, from the Department of Sociology, Morton Hall of Alabama, and author of the article School Uniforms, performed a study at a local junior high school and noticed uniforms did actually decrease violence more than those schools who had no dress codes at all (2-3). If a simple shirt and tie with dress pants were worn by boys and some type of skirt or dress for girls, baggy clothing would be eliminated which could conceal weapons such as guns or knives. Obviously, some type of dress code would stop this.

According to Loren Siegel, Director of Public Education for the American Civil Liberties Union author of Point of View: School Uniforms, in 1996, President Bill Clinton encouraged the use of school uniforms as part of an education program that sought to improve safety and discipline. Since then, a growing number of school systems in the U. S. have donned stricter dress codes and uniform policies.

In 21 states and the District of Columbia, schools and districts have the authority to tell their students what to wear. Six of the nation's largest school districts now have uniform policies. Philadelphia joins New York City; Los Angeles, California; Chicago, Illinois; Miami, Florida; and Houston, Texas. They

hope that the use of uniforms and dress codes will increase student safety and enhance learning (1 ). Can a change of clothes really change attitudes? Yes, suggest studies from Long Beach, California, the first district in the nation to have a mandatory uniform policy. School officials there say that since uniforms were required beginning in 1994, the number of suspensions and fights has dropped dramatically. Also, the average attendance has reached an all-time high. This shows a change in attitude by the students after the dress code was introduced.

Many young people like to wear baggy, saggy jeans. Some teens like low-cut pants or shirts that show their navels. Others like to dress in designer clothes that cost a lot of money. But should these clothes be worn to school? Another benefit of uniforms is a drop in teasing and competition, notes Karen Williams, principal of Lowell Beside Academy in Long Beach. When the whole school has to wear the same thing no one can be picked on for having an UN-cool brand of sneakers or jeans. Dress code itself is an important statement, we want our young children, whether they're poor, middle class or rich, when they're in school to define themselves primarily in terms of what's going on the inside, not what they're wearing on the outside (Siegel 1). Dress codes can put a stop to students being teased just because they can't afford designer clothes.

Making students wear the right clothes helps prepare them for the future. When students become adults, they will have jobs. They will have to dress a certain way at work. School dress codes help students get used to that idea.

School is not a place for showing off the latest fashions. Dress codes help put the students' focus on what's important: learning (Siegel 3).

A dress code will allow students to make friends on their personal qualities, rather than appearance. Too often students classify other students but the way they dress. Many students avoid some of their classmates because of the way they dress, rather than trying to be friends with them (Brunets 5-6). Students would make friends with people that have the same common interests with themselves, rather than people that dress like them. The anonymous author of Rules of Fashion says that the dress code is one thing that has served to lower crime, violence, and increase attendance and increase learning at a lot of schools. And a dress code itself and important statement because we want our young children, whether rich, poor, or middle class, when they're in school to define themselves primarily in terms of what's going on inside, not what they're wearing not he outside (Anonymous 2). As with any issue, there are people who are on both sides of this issue.

The argument for school uniforms says that uniforms decrease violence in the schools. People who argue this side of the issue state that when the students wear school uniforms, that the number of infractions on the rules is decreased. The argument against the Issue says that there are other programs that the schools can undertake that produce the same effects with out the school uniforms. Jan Conley, author of the article School and Dress Codes says that people that are against dress code policies stress the legal and financial aspects of such policies (2). The legal concerns the idea that

requiring a uniform violates children's individual rights. Financially, groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union have voiced concerns about the cost of uniforms; specifically that purchasing one is a mandatory cost which some disadvantaged parents are unable to afford. One angry mother commented, "Beware when someone tells you a uniform will save money by buying something. Those parents who currently spend a lot of money on clothing may spend less with a uniform policy. However, those parents who use hand-me-downs and second-hand clothing which are typically poorer parents will have to pay much more" (Conley 3-4).

This could be a real burden to parents. Officials in Long Beach say uniforms do reduce the risk of violence and gang activity in schools, because students no longer get hassled by gang members because of clothes with rival color insignias. Uniforms also help create a work-like atmosphere because the students spend less time discussing wardrobes. In this district, school uniforms are currently required from kindergarten through eighth grade in 70 schools, including approximately 60,000 students. School District press releases indicate that there is widespread parental support for the mandatory uniform policy.

Although California law provides a clause allowing parents to request a uniform exemption for their students, less than 1% of parents have requested such exemptions. In efforts to aid students from financially disadvantaged families, philanthropic groups in the area have provided \$160,000 in uniforms to Long Beach students (Conley 5-6). Most parents are very receptive of the idea of dress codes.

In North Carolina, the Scabbarbs County school code forbids certain types of clothing, such as halter tops, short shorts and thin straps on shirts. Gaston policy notes that students may be required to change if their clothes are unclean or disruptive. It also bans clothing that advertises products or services not permitted to minors by law or that is offensive or obscene. Charlotte-Muskellunge's policy spells out that shorts have to be knee-length, tops must cover midriffs and shirts can't say anything disruptive. Students also can't wear hats inside. Twenty-three Charlotte public schools go further and require uniforms, such as white-collared shirts and khaki pants (Conley 5-6). This kind of clothing disrupts the learning environment. The same goes with Chicago public schools where Fragrant High school went from 15 large gang fights a week to an occasional fist fight when they adopted the school dress code (Conley 5-6).

This shows that there is a reduction in violence when dress codes are used. These schools are becoming educational workplaces. Students arrive dressed for success, ready to learn; they are getting along with one another better and experiencing significant gains. There is less tardiness, less truancy, fewer referrals to the office for behavior problems, fewer suspensions and expulsions, better grades and in some case higher achievement (Conley 2). Students appear to do much better in school after dress codes are adopted. While very controversial at this time, dress codes can and do make schools a safer place for our children to learn. It cuts down the violence and eliminates the problems of wearing hats or jackets that could carry weapons to school.

Every school system should adopt some type of dress code.