

## UNIFORM / DRESS CODE POLICY

*At Meridian School, we believe that the purpose of uniforms is to foster a sense of community and to allow students to focus on what matters most in the classroom, the academics.*

All clothing must fit appropriately, not too tight or too loose, and be in good condition and clean. Hats, hoods, and bandanas are not to be worn in the building at any time. Hairstyles and other items worn (shoes, socks, jewelry and hair accessories) should not be considered a distraction to the learning process.

### Uniform/Dress Code Policy for Primary Grades K - 6

The Meridian uniform/dress code policy for primary (grades K-6) requires the colors white, red, or gray for tops; red, white, gray or navy for sweaters/sweatshirts; and navy, gray, or tan khaki bottoms/jumpers. Jeans may be worn on Fridays only. See below for specifics. Meridian students are encouraged to wear their Meridian t-shirts/sweatshirts on Fridays! Clothing must fit appropriately (not too loose, not too tight). Girls should wear shorts under skirts/jumpers on P. E. days.

<b>Tops</b> – Collared polo or button-front, long or short sleeved without logo; all shirts must extend past top of bottom wear	Red, White or Gray – solid color
<b>Sweaters</b> – knit cardigan or pullover – worn over top as stated above	Red, White, Gray or Navy – solid color
<b>Optional Friday T-Shirts or Sweatshirt</b> – Meridian only; <b>otherwise Friday tops will be the same as Uniform tops</b>	Sold by the school; Worn only on Fridays
<b>Bottoms:</b> Pants or Capris; Shorts/Skirts/Jumpers (must be no more than 2” above the knee) Material must be fabric weave – no sweat pants/wind suits, etc.	Navy, Gray, or Tan Khaki – solid color No other color stripes or decorations
<b>Friday Jeans</b> – appropriate fit (not too loose, too tight) no holes; worn only on Friday	Navy denim with no decorations
<b>Shoes</b>	Closed toe, no high heels or sandals without backs; <b>boots only under pants; no boot tennis shoes</b>
<b>Socks/Tights/Leggings</b>	Navy, Gray, Tan, or White – solid color
<b>Hair Accessories</b>	Red, White, Gray, Tan or Navy

### Uniform/Dress Code Policy for Secondary Grades 7 - 9

The Meridian uniform/dress code policy for secondary students (grades 7 -9) is essentially the same as for primary students as outlined above with the following exceptions:

1. **RED** polo shirts will be the only top option. (Parents should make every effort to purchase shirts in **primary red** and avoid hues of purple or maroon. (Meridian School T-Shirts are permitted on Friday as stated above.)
2. **Tan Khaki** will be the only bottom wear, color option. (Jeans are allowed on Fridays only - as stated above.)
3. Jumpers are not a uniform option for secondary students.
4. Shoes, rather than sneakers are the preferred footwear to compliment the tan khaki bottom wear, but sneakers that are solid, neutral color (white, tan, brown or black) and not considered a distraction will be permitted.
5. Students will change into T-Shirt/Shorts/Sneakers for Physical Education class.

### DRESS CODE VIOLATION CONSEQUENCES

Uniform violations are considered a disciplinary issue and will be handled as follows:

1st Violation: Verbal warning from teacher or administrator

2nd Violation: Parent notification will be issued to be signed and returned

3rd Violation: Discipline referral will be issued and parents will be required to bring appropriate clothes.

Subsequent violation: Student is subject to further disciplinary actions at the discretion of the administrator. Any work missed due to dress code violations will be made up on the student's own time.



Rick Fernández, Head of School

2555 North IH-35  
Round Rock, TX 78664  
tel: (512) 660.5230  
fax: (512) 660.5231

[www.mwschool.org](http://www.mwschool.org)

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Dear Meridian Secondary and Rising Secondary Students and Parents,

As most of you know, a secondary uniform policy proposal was presented at the February 9, 2012 Board meeting, but not adopted. Based on parent and student feedback, I will propose to the Board that next year's Secondary Uniform Policy be essentially the same as Primary's Uniform Policy with five exceptions. Rather than to simply show you the five exceptions, I feel I must explain my rationale and give you a little background information.

Because of my desire to give our older students continued voice in their education, it was my decision to postpone the adoption of a secondary uniform policy and to go with a dress code during the inaugural school year. My ultimate goal was for secondary students to take the adoption of a secondary uniform policy through a process. I am proud of our student council. There were many ideas, much discussion and what appeared to be consensus. However, there was not enough time built in for the process to be thorough. The student council should have been established earlier in the year and more opportunities for discussion between representatives and their classmates should have been provided.

When results don't turn out like our expectations, I think it is important to reexamine our beliefs. Our student/parent handbook simply and eloquently states that, "At Meridian School, we believe that the purpose of uniforms is to foster a sense of community and to allow students to focus on what matters most in the classroom, the academics."

What has pleased me most about being at Meridian is our community spirit. Ninety-nine percent of what I hear from our community is that they think we are doing a good job. This is evident by the amount and quality of parent volunteers we have at our school. Meridian is a good school that will soon be a great school because of our mutual respect for one another and our sense of community.

I received about four written communications from parents and about the same amount from students expressing concerns with the secondary uniform proposals. I received a student-initiated poll from our seventh and eighth-graders. I even received a persuasive argument along with research data of a study of the various uniform policies in the greater Austin area conducted by one of our sixth-graders. This student demonstrated the following IB Learner Profile traits in his study: thinker, communicator, inquirer, caring, risk-taker, reflective, principled and open-minded. All communications whether from student or parent were respectful and offered solutions to their stated concerns.

Only a few of the students mentioned that if given a choice, they would prefer not to have uniforms at all, but quickly realized that this was non-negotiable. The following commonalities resurfaced:

- Polo shirts were preferred to dress shirts
- Khaki bottoms were preferred over any other color or fabric
- Comfort, affordability and easy laundering are important
- Sneakers should be an option for footwear
- The primary and secondary uniform policies should be the same
- Shorts should be an option especially during the summer months
- A white top should NOT be the only color option for various reasons

"Keep the primary and secondary uniform policies the same" seemed to be the collective message I was hearing from the written communications. Since parents were not polled, as they should have been, I didn't hear from most parents. I certainly did not take this silence to imply approval or disapproval of the proposed uniform options. However, one parent came up to me after the board meeting and said, "my little one would have loved the dressed-up version," and another parent told me, "I thought the 'dressed up jeans proposal' was the perfect compromise," and a husband and wife asked, "What do you need us to do to help pass the proposed uniform policy options?"

When our students become high school juniors and seniors, they may want a uniform that more closely represents their age. The Volunteers-in-Partnership School Life Committee might be given the task of taking any future uniform change through a thorough process that includes careful input from all Meridian stakeholders.

I thank everyone for their continued support as we experience growing pains on our journey to becoming a school of excellence and IB continuum school.

Go Lions,

Rick Fernández  
Meridian Head of School