

Students Seek Change in Oak Hills Dress Code Policy

A recent petition titled “Change Oak Hills Highschool Dresscode Policy” created by an Oak Hills student has been circulating on various platforms such as Snapchat recently. The petition, which has garnered nearly 600 signatures, goes into the qualms that primarily female students have with the current dress code policy. The creator of the petition, who shall remain anonymous, argues that “The adults in this school are not handling these rules in a responsible manner, and instead, shame students in front of their peers.”



The issues with the current policy focus around female tops. The current policy, which can be found on the Oak Hills High School website, states, “Bare midriffs, cropped tops, see-through tops, are not acceptable, nor are shirts with no sides.” This rule applies to all of the Oak Hills student body. Although, Lauren Saylor, a senior at Oak Hills, maintains that “the males get away with wearing inappropriate shirts and have their shoulders showing but females and non-binary can’t?” She follows up with this claim: “it’s very sexist and needs to change now.”

A solution that many schools across the country have adopted since 2016 is that of the Oregon NOW dress code. “All students and staff should understand that they are responsible for managing their own personal ‘distractions’ without regulating individual students’ clothing/self expression” (noworegon.org). This idea that it is not the dress code rule breakers’ problem but instead the people who find the student’s outfit distracting brings up an entirely new perspective on the proper way to handle dress code.

Most if not all dress code policies are based on an article of clothing being a distraction. Although, the question of *‘is my outfit really distracting, or am I being racially/sexually targeted by my peers’* seems to be one that needs more attention by school’s students and staff. When someone identifies something as a distraction, that is their own problem that they should be able to deal with without having to put others through shaming, harassment, and embarrassment. A mere two inches of a woman’s midriff showing only affects the learning environment if the people in the classroom lack the human decency it takes to accept everyone’s body without any strings attached. Ashley Brueckner, a junior at Oak Hills High School agrees that “Your private parts hanging out are a complete different story compared to an inch of your stomach or shoulders showing.”

After interviewing Mr. Hunt, the principal of Oak Hills High School, it seems that he can relate to what Ashley has said. After all, he has a daughter of his own who witnesses the same dress code problems that appear in a school setting. Though Mr. Hunt is not the one in charge of the dress code policy, he has still made efforts to meet with his team about the topic. One of the

main places in need for improvement that was discussed was the way that staff has handled dress coding students. Mr. Hunt realizes that the faculty embarrassing students is much worse and sometimes more distracting than the original violations the outfit had with the dress code.

Furthermore, when I brought up the comparison between males usually not getting dress coded for muscle shirts vs. females getting dress coded for tank tops, he was clear to note that female tank tops have many varieties of the width of the strap. The strict tank top policy is spaghetti straps. If a female wears a tank top with reasonable width beyond the thin spaghetti straps, it can be respected without an issue.

Though there does not appear to be any immediate action coming from Oak Hills staff, many students still set their hopes high for the future of the Oak Hills High School dress code policy. With the help of Mr. Hunt, it is my own hope that the point can be made for faculty to not bring crazy attention or embarrassment to students for their violations of dress code. I believe that both students and staff should remain respectful no matter the outcome of the dress code policy, and with that respect, students can hopefully become more comfortable in their own skin.