

## **Director's Communiqué to the MLWGS Community September 23, 2014**

This is the time of year when we remind students of our dress code. As we began issue reminders this fall, in an organized and thoughtful manner, students raised some legitimate questions pertinent to a few aspects of our current guidelines. It is useful to periodically engage in a review of the code to ensure that it is "living" in nature; that is, reflects contemporary community standards of appropriate high school attire. Because it has been some time since our guidelines underwent such a review, we plan to have our SCA take up the issue for consideration. Recommendations made by our student leaders will then be funneled to faculty and parent channels and shared with our Superintendents. Ultimately, our Board must approve recommended changes. Below is our current code as written in our student handbook.

### **"STUDENT DRESS CODE**

- *All students are expected to dress appropriately for the high school environment. Any clothing that interferes with or disrupts the educational environment is unacceptable. Clothing with language or images that are vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene, or clothing that promotes illegal or violent conduct, such as the unlawful use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia, or clothing that contains threats such as gang symbols is prohibited.*
- *Clothing should fit, be neat and clean, and conform to standards of safety, good taste, and decency. Clothing that exposes the midriff, or undergarments, or that is otherwise provocative, is prohibited. Examples of prohibited clothing include, but are not limited to: sleeveless shirts for males, sagging or low-cut pants, low-cut necklines, tube tops, halter tops, backless blouses or blouses with only ties in the back, clothing constructed of see-through materials, and head coverings unless required for religious or medical purposes. Shorts, skirts, dresses and jumpers must be at least fingertip in length. Jeans or other pants with slits, tears or worn through areas above fingertip length are not acceptable attire.*
- *Additionally, disciplinary action will be taken against any student taking part in gang-related activities that are disruptive to the school environment, which include the display of any apparel, jewelry, accessory, tattoo, or manner of grooming that, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute, denotes membership in a gang that advocates illegal or disruptive behavior.*
- *Dresses or skirts for girls and coats and ties for boys are required at certain functions to be designated by the administration.*
- *Shoes must be worn at all times. Closed toe shoes are required in science lab classes*
- *The dress code is in effect from when a student arrives at school until he or she departs from school. The dress code is still in effect when they attend co-curricular functions after school hours and at school dances.*
- *Hats are not to be worn in classrooms, or the auditorium.*
- *Sunglasses are not to be worn indoors.*
- *Parents of students requiring accommodation for religious beliefs, disabilities, or other good causes should contact the Director.*
- *Students not complying with this code will be asked to cover the non-complying clothing, change clothes, or go home. Repeated infractions will result in disciplinary action."*

Second, based on feedback, we have engaged in a lot of work regarding our community service program over the last 2 years. While our students already do amazing work in the community (both near and far), we felt it important to strengthen our program in particular ways. With that in mind, our efforts are designed to (1) make MWGS students' work more visible in the community, (2) better connect community service to the mission of the school; (3) provide students with the opportunity to complete community service hours through small or large groups, and (4) enhance the accessibility of community service information.

We invite you to visit the new community service website at [www.maggiewalkermatters.weebly.com](http://www.maggiewalkermatters.weebly.com) and, in particular, visit the opportunities tab at <http://maggiewalkermatters.weebly.com/opportunities> to discover what activities are available for our students.

A course entitled "Student Information – Community Service" has also been created in the school's learning management system (itsLearning) and students have been registered in order to access all matters community service. Finally, we are working on a Facebook page and will announce that in due time. We also plan to have a design contest to create a "Dragons in the Community" t-shirt that students may wear when participating in community service events! Please keep in mind all of this is still a work in progress and much remains to be done. As the process unfolds, if you have any questions or comments please contact Ms. Sharon Parker (Community Service Coordinator) at [sparker@gsgis.k12.va.us](mailto:sparker@gsgis.k12.va.us) as Sharon is leading this effort.

Thank you for your ongoing support! Jeff McGee, Director

