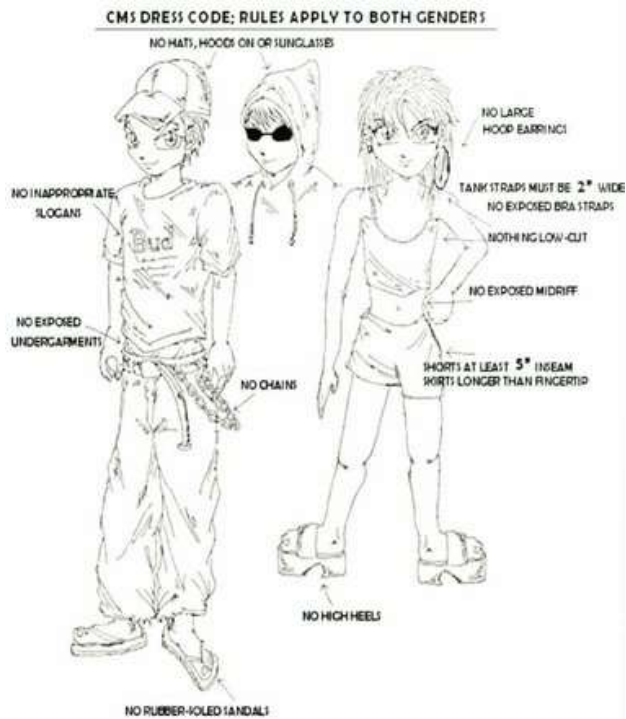


No more short shorts in the Chathams - at least not at the middle school



By **Tracy Ness/Independent Press** Published: Sunday, July 10, 2011, 8:44 AM



THE CHATHAMS — Who wears short shorts? Not any of the students attending Chatham Middle School this September. A team of 20 staff members, seven students and a parent representative have revised the outdated dress code manual making changes that will have many parents hitting the malls before the new fall looks come in.

Perhaps the biggest change for many of the tween fashionistas is the new requirement that shorts must have at least a five inch inseam and skirts must be below fingertip level when hands are at the sides.

That means the popular three inch inseam shorts from Abercrombie & Fitch, J Crew and Aeropostale and barely there miniskirts will be relegated to weekend duty. Tank tops must have straps that are two inches wide with no undergarments showing and high heels are also out.

On the tween side for boys the message is pull your pants up, take the hat or hoodie off and leave the t-shirts with the inappropriate slogans at home. Boys are not allowed to show the tops of their boxer shorts above the waist line and flip flops are not allowed. All the dress code rules

apply to both genders.

Principal Bob Accardi said that the dress code committee discussions were "lively and animated" and it took more than two hours and some compromise on both sides to come up with the new regulations.

"We've always had a dress code in place but overtime it has become outdated and, frankly, not enforced as vigorously as it should have been," he said. "This year we've seen a tremendous spike in revealing clothing styles and we've seen how certain types of clothing have had a less than positive impact on the educational process."

Accardi said that they needed to acknowledge the old adage "there is a time and place for everything." He explained that individuals who choose to wear revealing clothing will not be condemned or demeaned, the committee simply agreed that school was not the place for such attire. As for enforcement, the administration will recognize that mistakes happen and students will be given one chance to fix the issue before parents are notified.

According to one seventh grader who wished to remain anonymous, "Many girls are very unhappy about the new rules because they all wear the clothes that go against the code. The thing I find interesting is that the dress codes has been in effect for the whole year and no one bothered to enforce it."

If you are just reading about the new policy for the first time and feeling a tremendous amount of panic, don't worry. The administration has put together a list of retailers selling the not short shorts including Target, Old Navy and the Gap. Getting your child to wear them is an entirely different matter!