



Search

[Vol. 53 No. 4 \(2007\): Winter](#)

[Home](#) / [Archives](#) / [2007](#)

/ [ARTICLES](#)

Cleavage in a Tank Top: Bodily Prohibition and the Discourses of School Dress Codes

Shauna Pomerantz

Abstract

In this article I explore the gendered assumptions in the new generation of dress codes that have swept through North American schools in response to how girls are dressing these days. Through a feminist poststructural examination of a particular case in Langley, British Columbia, I locate three contradictory discourses in one school's dress code policy that positioned girls as irresponsible, deviant, and in need of help. I argue that these discourses reproduce dominant and oppressive forms of gender and sexuality. I conclude by suggesting that much work remains to be done on the minutiae of school policies such as dress codes given that they contribute to how the student('s) body is thought about, looked at, and treated.

 PDF

Published
2007-12-01

Issue
[Vol. 53 No. 4 \(2007\): Winter 2007](#)

Section
ARTICLES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA COPYRIGHT LICENSE AND PUBLICATION AGREEMENT

If accepted, authors will be asked to sign a copyright agreement with the following points:

- A. Where there is any inconsistency between this Copyright License and Publication Agreement and any other document or agreement in relation to the same subject matter, the terms of this Agreement shall govern.
- B. This document sets out the rights you are granting in relation to publication of your article, book review, or research note entitled (the "Article") through inclusion in the academic journal titled Alberta Journal of Educational Research (the "Journal") published through the Faculty of Education, representing the Governors of the University of Alberta (the "Journal Editor").
- C. There will be no payment to you for this publication and grant of rights. In consideration of the agreement to publish the Article in the Journal:

1. You are warranting that:

- a. the content of the Article is your original work, and its content does not contain any material infringing the copyright of others; or, where the Article is not entirely your original work, you have obtained all necessary permissions in writing to grant the rights you are giving in this agreement;
- b. the content of the Article does not contain any material that is defamatory of, or violates the privacy rights of, or discloses the confidential information of, any other person;
- c. the Article has not been published elsewhere in whole or in part, and you will not allow publication of the Article elsewhere without the consent of the Journal Editor;
- d. the names of all co-authors and contributors to the Article are:

2. You agree to license the copyright in the Article to the Journal Editor, on a worldwide, perpetual, royalty free basis; and to the extent required by the terms of this agreement. You shall retain the right at all times to be acknowledged as the/an author of the Article.

3. You further agree that the Journal Editor has the entitlement to deal with the Article as the Journal Editor sees fit, and including in the following manner;

- a. The right to print, publish, market, communicate and distribute the Article and the Journal, in this and any subsequent editions, in all media (including electronic media), in all languages, and in all territories, during the full term of copyright, and including any form of the Article separated from the Journal, such as in a database, abstract, offprint, translation or otherwise, and to authorize third parties to do so;
- b. The right to register copyright of the Journal;
- c. The right to edit the Article, to conform to editorial policy as the Journal Editor sees fit.

4. If any co-author or contributor to the Article does not sign this agreement, the Journal Editor reserves the right to refuse to publish the Article.

[Open Journal Systems](#)

Information

[For Readers](#)

[For Authors](#)

[For Librarians](#)

Current Issue

[ATOM 1.0](#)

[RSS 2.0](#)

[RSS 1.0](#)

For questions about this site or *AJER* in general, please email: ajer@ualberta.ca (remove spaces)

ISSN: 1923-1857

Copyright © 1998-2014 AJER. All rights reserved.



Platform &
workflow by
OJS / PKP

Beyond hiding body parts, dress codes typically list a number of clothing items that students are not allowed to wear to school. The average dress code prohibits around 32 items (the maximum was 97). Here are snippets of what these policies look like of schools. narrow straps leggings muscle shirt tank top tight clothing. 20 - 30%. of schools. Most schools offer a few sentences at the beginning of their dress code to justify its existence. Others explain the reasoning for rules when discussing why particular items are prohibited. Here are a few examples 4. DaCosta K. Dress Code Blues:

An Exploration of Urban Students' Reactions to a Public High School Uniform Policy // *The Journal of Negro Education*. 2006. Vol. 75. № 1 (Winter). P. 49–59. 5. Gentile E., Imberman S. A. Dressed for success? 7. Happel A. Ritualized girling: school uniforms and the compulsory performance of gender // *Journal of Gender Studies*. 2013. Vol. 22. № 1. P. 92–96. 8. Hidalgo D., Onofa M., Oosterbeek H., Ponce J. Can provision of free school uniforms harm attendance? 15. Pomerantz S. Cleavage in a Tank Top: Bodily Prohibition and the Discourses of School Dress Codes // *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*. 2007 (Winter). Vol. 53. № 4. P. 373–386. 11. Most school dress codes allow for individualization. Dress codes restrict what type of clothing students can wear when going to school, but they have fewer restrictions on what accessories are permissible in the classroom. Most kids can wear earrings, necklaces, headbands, or bracelets that allow them to express their individuality. Some items may be specifically prohibited, like how the Tulsa school district restricts scarves, bandanas, or curlers inside of school buildings. It had no impact on the substance abuse behaviors in the classroom, and the impact on peer attitudes was found to be minimal. This study even found that some students performed worse on tests when uniforms were mandated, with the impact equal for elementary students and eighth-graders. Teens and School. Typical School Dress Codes. Typical School Dress Codes. By Karen Frazier Youth Volunteer. Many dress codes call for clothing teens wear to school to be reasonably modest, meaning clothes cover the body well, and decent. Guidelines surrounding modesty seek to minimize distraction and improve the safety of students, but are often open to interpretation based on personal values. Related Articles. Bra straps under tank tops, underwear beneath baggy pants, or even undergarments showing through rips and holes in clothing are prohibited. The Oregon NOW Model Student Dress Code is meant to be modernized and inclusive, but prohibits visible underwear with the distinction that undergarment waistbands and straps showing are not a violation. Necklines.