



Rama Road Elementary School School Uniform Policy 2013-14

Educational Value

Our school uniform program, by itself, will not solve all problems of school discipline but it can be a positive contributing factor to discipline and safety at Rama Road Elementary. Children who feel safe and secure are better students who engage more readily in their own instruction every day. When student clothing is not an issue, the school focus can be more scholarly and directly aligned to academic achievement.

The benefits of uniforms in the educational setting are:

- They contribute to a more academic environment - one in which students can concentrate on their schoolwork.
- Eliminates the morning struggle parents face with students trying to decide what to wear to school each day.
- Clearly defines scholarly focus – school time vs. play time
- Gives students something in common and promotes pride in their appearance and school spirit
- Helps parents and students resist peer pressure related to clothing
- Helps students learn that individualism comes from within rather than from outward appearances.
- Assists the staff in recognizing individuals on campus who are not Rama Road students.

Per BOE policy, a schoolwide uniform vote was completed the week of March 22, 2013. All families at Rama Road had the opportunity to participate in this vote. The resulting vote was: **73% YES FOR UNIFORMS** and 27% against.

Uniform Description

Rama Road Elementary's uniform will consist of khaki pants or shorts for boys and khaki pants, shorts, skirts or jumpers for girls. Both boys and girls will wear a shirt with a collar in the colors of white, light blue or navy. Navy blue or white sweaters can be worn on top of the shirt. Closed toe shoes, preferably tennis shoes are required. Open-toe sandals and flip-flops are not permitted by teachers or students. Children are encouraged to wear a belt, as sagging pants are not allowed. Blue jeans are not allowed as an option of pants and t-shirts are not allowed as an option of t-shirts, unless it's a Rama Proud t-shirt.

School uniforms are now available at a number of local stores, including discount stores such as Walmart and Target, as well as local consignment stores near the neighborhoods that feed to RRES. Prices for these uniform pieces range anywhere from \$3 to \$15 per piece depending on the type of store.

Provisions for an Adequate Number of Uniforms for Students - Partnerships

Rama Road's community partners will play a role in the donation of funds and uniforms to establish a potential initial fund for the purchase of uniforms for families who cannot afford uniforms on their own. The RRES CIS coordinator will also work closely with local retailers to identify avenues of support they can provide through discounted clothing, grants for bulk purchases and uniform starter kits. The RRES CIS will work closely

with the PTA and Interpreter/Translator to establish a “clothes closet” for hand-me-down uniforms to be donated to the school. Students will be able to “borrow” clothes from the closet to wear if they come to school not in uniform or if they soil their clothes during the day. Students in need will also be able to take home clothes from this closet as needed. Potential partners include: Sardis Presbyterian Church, Christ Episcopal Church, Belk’s, Target and Walmart.

Parental Involvement

School uniforms were first discussed at an SLT meeting in 2012. The committee researched the successes of uniform policies throughout CMS by analyzing uniform policies and speaking with staff and community members at specific uniform schools. Parents and teachers researched local merchants who provide uniforms.

In October 2012, SLT reached consensus that an informal uniform proposal would go out to all Rama Road families during Parent/Teacher Conferences to gauge interest in the idea and to determine whether or not to proceed with the uniform adoption process. 67% of families agreed to adopt uniforms. Approximately 10% of families requested more information and 23% of families were opposed to the idea. The SLT team agreed there was enough interest from families to proceed with the process. Fact sheets were prepared and distributed to all families through monthly family newsletters from the school. In March 2013, the proposal was presented to parents in a letter from the principal and sent as a survey. A ConnectEd message was crafted and delivered to all families encouraging their participation. Parents were given an opportunity to provide feedback on their desire to implement a uniform policy and give suggestions to improve this policy.

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Moving forward, the RRES SLT and PTA will assist in the implementation of the uniform program. Parents and school staff will manage such aspects such as solicitations of donations and management of the uniform closet. Parents will be instrumental in the implementation of the plan as they prepare students for school each morning and work with school staff to ensure all students comply with the new policy. Parents will continue to be valuable partners as the plan is put into action.

Communication of the Uniform Policy

The RRES Uniform Policy and Guidelines will be shared with families prior to the end of the school year via Principal newsletters and grade level newsletters. Uniform information and guidelines will also be published for parents in the front of the student agenda, in the Principal newsletters, on the school webpage and a copy will be provided in the front office ongoing through the summer of 2013 and into the school year. Uniform postcards will be mailed to families in early July to remind parents of the start date for uniforms and what items students need to have in time for school to start. Cards will also be handed out to new families registering throughout the summer.

Enforcement of the Uniform Policy

Wearing the school uniform will be an expectation of all students at Rama Road Elementary. Students will be required to comply. School staff will work with parents who do not comply with our uniform policy as follows:

- 1st time out of uniform – parent phone call and reminder of policy in writing
- 2nd and beyond occurrences of uniform policy non-compliance – parents will be called and asked to bring proper uniform attire to the school for the student to change. If the parent cannot be reached or refuses, the child will be given a clean “loaner” uniform to wear during the day. Written reminder of the uniform policy will also be issued.

Exceptions/Accommodations

Several programs, plays, and other events planned and organized by the school may call for adjustments in the uniform policy as students would be required to “dress up.” These days would be communicated in advance to parents and clear expectations for dress would be given to students and families.

The RRES uniform program will accommodate any student who wears particular attire as part of an individual religious practice or requires specific attire to accommodate a physical disability. The previously described scholarship program will assist students with financial need.

Incentives

The Rama Road Elementary Positive Climate Committee will prepare activities to reward students for coming to school in uniform daily. They will recognize classrooms that consistently have 100% of students in uniform and organize regular “personality days” when students who meet RRES expectations will be allowed to wear appropriate casual attire. Students and teachers will be encouraged to wear Rama Proud t-shirts on Fridays to promote school spirit.