

Philosophy of Appearance

Growing up in a culture of shifting standards makes it challenging for students to navigate personal expression while staying focused on what truly matters—character, faith, and academic purpose.

At Hill Country Christian School, we believe true maturity isn't about forced compliance; it's about learning self-regulation. We do not see the dress code as a list of rules for its own sake. We see it as a helpful boundary aligned with the freedom of the Gospel. These standards help students practice self-control, honor our Christ-centered mission, and promote a positive learning environment.

To help families navigate this smoothly, we operate on a clear plan of partnership:

- **The Daily Standard:** Students should arrive on campus in dress code and remain in dress code until they leave for the day.
- **Family Ownership:** Parents and students share the responsibility for following the dress code. We ask families to review clothing choices before students come to school.
- **The “When in Doubt” Filter:** To avoid distractions or awkward midday corrections, use a simple rule of thumb: if a student or parent is unsure whether an item meets the dress code guidelines, the student should not wear it to school.

By learning to manage their appearance with modesty, neatness, and appropriateness, Hill Country students protect their environment from distractions and develop a practical life skill that prepares them to step into adulthood with confidence and respect.

Middle and High School Dress Code Standards (Grade 6–12)

As our Middle and High School students mature, they take on greater responsibility as leaders on our campus. The secondary dress code is designed to promote a focused, professional learning environment, eliminate shallow distractions, and encourage respect for our community's shared values.

General Appearance and Campus Culture

- **Expression and Graphics:** In alignment with our Christ-centered mission, attire may not be used as a vehicle for morally, socially, or scripturally inappropriate expression, nor should it feature politically partisan or socially divisive themes. School administrators make the final determination on appropriate content.
- **Hats, Hoods, and Headwear:** Hats, visors, and bandanas are not permitted on campus during the school day (indoors or outdoors). The only exception is outdoor use of warm winter hats when temperatures drop below 50°F. Hooded sweatshirts may be worn, but hoods must remain down at all times while indoors.
- **Body Art and Alterations:** Tattoos must remain entirely covered during school hours. Extreme body modifications, including ear gauges or body mutilation, are not permitted. Undergarments must never be visible.

- **Learning Environment Boundaries:** To maintain an active and engaged academic atmosphere, students are not permitted to carry or wear blankets or pillows during the school day.
- **Footwear:** For safety and readiness, shoes must be worn at all times. Sandals, slip-ons, and clean flip-flops are acceptable.

Universal Clothing Standards (All Middle and High School Students)

- **The Waistline Rule:** All pants, jeans, and shorts must be worn securely at the natural waistline and may not drag on the floor.
- **The Mid-Thigh Standard:** To ensure modesty and comfort throughout the school day, all shorts must reach at least mid-thigh whether the student is standing or seated.
- **Pants and Jeans:** Slacks, khakis, chinos, and jeans are welcome. Jeans may feature a slightly frayed ankle hem, but ripped, torn, or jeans with holes are not allowed, regardless of what is worn underneath.
- **Athletic Wear and Joggers (Fabric Guidelines):** Clean, well-fitting athletic pants, synthetic joggers, and nylon track pants are permitted, provided they are not tight or form-fitting.
- **Permitted Fabrics:** Smooth polyester, nylon, windbreaker material, or performance cotton-twill blends.
- **Prohibited Items:** Heavy cotton-fleece joggers, traditional sweatpants, whether cuffed or uncuffed, and pajamas are strictly prohibited.

Specific Standards by Gender

Young Women's Standards (Grades 6–12)

- **Dresses, Skirts, and Skorts:** Skirts and dresses (including the dress lining) must fall no shorter than mid-thigh and must not be form-fitting. Athletic tennis skirts and athletic skorts are not allowed, regardless of their length.
- **Tops and Blouses:** Tops must cover the midriff, back, and bust area entirely, even when the student is moving or reaching. Materials must not be sheer or see-through. Sleeveless tops are permitted but must have a shoulder strap width of at least two inches (use the width of a credit card as a guide). Halters, spaghetti straps, and racerback tops are not allowed.
- **Leggings:** Solid, opaque leggings (without sheer panels) may be worn, but only when paired with a modest, neat top or tunic that fully extends past mid-thigh whether the student is standing or seated.
- **Grooming and Piercings:** Hair must be clean, neat, and a natural human color (no unnatural streaks or vibrant dyes). Makeup and jewelry should be modest and appropriate for a school setting. Piercings are restricted to the ears and a single, small, modest nose stud.

Young Men's Standards (Grades 6–12)

- **Shirts:** All shirts and T-shirts must have sleeves and must fully cover the midsection at all times. Sleeveless shirts, tank tops, and muscle shirts are not permitted.
- **Facial Hair and Grooming:** Hair must be kept clean, well-combed, and a natural human color. Gentlemen may wear facial hair, provided it is kept neatly trimmed, well-groomed, and professionally maintained.
- **Jewelry and Piercings:** Jewelry should be minimal and modest. Young men are not permitted to wear body or facial piercings, except for small, modest stud earrings.

Guidelines for School-Sponsored Dances

School dances—including Homecoming, Winter Formal, and Prom—are joyful milestones in our community life. To protect the wholesome, celebratory atmosphere of these events, these dress and conduct guidelines apply to all Hill Country students and their outside guests.

The Compliance Standard

Any questions about the suitability of an outfit should be directed to the appropriate school office prior to the event (bringing a photo of the dress is highly encouraged). Students or guests who arrive out of compliance will be required to change into appropriate attire before being admitted to the dance, and tickets will not be refunded.

Middle School Dance Attire

- **Formal and Semi-Formal Dress Standards:**
 - **Length and Slits:** Dresses and any skirt slits must fall no shorter than mid-thigh.
 - **Coverage:** No cut-outs, exposed midriffs, or visible cleavage are permitted. This includes areas covered by sheer or illusion fabric.
 - **The Backline:** The back of the dress must not dip below natural belly-button height.
 - **Necklines and Straps:** Necklines must be modest in the front and around the arms.
 - **Strapless dresses are not permitted for Middle School dances;** however, straps of any width are acceptable.
- **Casual and Themed Dances:** For casual or themed events, the regular school dress code applies with two exceptions: hats may be worn if they fit the theme, and athletic wear is acceptable if it meets standard modesty rules. Faces must remain fully visible at all times, and costumes must not impede safe movement.

High School Dance Attire

Young Women

- **Formal and Semi-Formal Dress Standards:**
 - **Length and Slits:** Dresses (including dress linings) and any skirt slits must fall no shorter than mid-thigh.
 - **Coverage:** No cut-outs, exposed midriffs, or visible cleavage are permitted. This includes sections of the dress where skin is visible through sheer or lace fabric.
 - **The Backline:** The back of the dress must not dip below natural belly-button height.
 - **Undergarments:** Appropriate and supportive undergarments must be worn and must remain entirely invisible.
 - **Accessories:** Indoor eyewear, including sunglasses, is not permitted.

Young Men

- **Homecoming, Winter Formal, and Semi-Formals:** Gentlemen are encouraged to wear a suit with dress shoes. The minimum requirement is a collared dress shirt paired with slacks (no jeans, sandals, or flip-flops). Alternatively, a polished "Texas Tuxedo" is welcome (nice jeans paired with a long-sleeved dress shirt, dress boots, and a blazer or sport coat).
- **Junior and Senior Prom:** This is a formal event. Gentlemen are required to wear a traditional suit or a tuxedo with dress shoes. Ties are strongly encouraged but not required. Jeans, sandals, and flip-flops are strictly prohibited.
- **Accessories:** Indoor eyewear, including sunglasses, is not permitted.