



TRINITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Teaching the Art of Learning

May 16, 2008

Dear Trinity Families,

Mr. Armistead has recently presented updates to our Lower School dress policy for next year. The Board would like to provide additional information to our school body about the two main goals and a few of the underlying considerations addressed by this Lower School dress code update. There are two issues or goals that prompted the adjustment at the Lower School. The first is the need to make the Lower School teachers' job of enforcement of the dress code easier. The second is the preference and strong desire by the Board, Lower School administration and most of the teaching staff to have a different or neater appearance at our Lower School – specifically a move away from t-shirts and jeans. The considerations for these two goals are as follows.

For the past several years at the Lower School, many families have consistently upheld the dress code. The result is that many students are neat and modestly dressed at school. This is our goal. However, there are a growing number of students who come to school in clothing that does not follow the dress code. For the teaching staff, this growing issue has taken much time and drained energy away from their main job of teaching. It is our hope that the updated code will provide more time for the teachers to instruct our children with less time spent on dress concerns.

The second goal of the Lower School administration and most of the Lower School teaching staff is the preference to move away from t-shirts and jeans. This dress is arguably less neat in appearance than chinos and collared shirts. Moving to this type of dress is intended to make a statement that during school hours our students are holding a higher standard than the current secular culture's pressure towards sloppy or messy dress. It is understood that while many may wear jeans and a t-shirt and look neat, many do not. It is possible for students to wear any clothing, even chinos and collared shirts, in a sloppy or messy way. Belts will still need to be worn and shirts tucked in. As a parent has recently noted, parents lead their children in standard and neatness of dress. It remains our desire to partner with you as you train your children. Additionally, in an effort to keep chinos in good repair and looking neat, a changing time for PE will be provided next year.

With these main goals in mind it is helpful to understand some further specific considerations. The Board greatly appreciates the letters we have received from parents addressing the following concerns. First, while there is no clear Biblical mandate for a particular school dress, our handbook does clearly outline our reasoning for school attire based on scripture. Additionally as students mature and progress through the three stages of the trivium, progressively more room will be provided for decision-making on school dress. Though the choices of clothes are more specific in our updated Lower School dress code, it remains our desire to partner with parents so that parents remain in the lead teaching their children about what to wear. Outside of the 35 hours our children spend at school there are 70 or more waking hours per week, available to continue to train our children to dress in ways that honor the Lord according to each family's personal convictions and preferences. Further, there is no particular type of clothing that solely represents a Christian, Classical school. Certainly both secular and Christian schools have used uniforms and dress codes. Our desire is to be responsive to the needs of our Lower School administration and staff and make

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adaptations to our dress code that will be a more helpful tool for our school. Again the practical benefits during school hours of less time on enforcement of dress, more time for instruction, and a neater appearance by all students are the goals. Additionally, we live in an increasingly materialistic culture that often displays sloppy and immodest dress. We want to strengthen our commitment to neat and orderly appearance.

Another concern is cost. While the Board considered this update, we spoke with families who have experienced this type of dress code and we did some number crunching. In making this revision, careful attention was made to keep the cost as low as possible. The proposed code was designed to allow some flexibility in pricing by allowing all pants, shorts and skirts to be navy or khaki chino material from any manufacturer. In response to expressed concerns from parents about finances, the Board voted to allow the administration to find other vendors who can supply quality shirts with logos at a reduced cost. Details on another approved vendor will be coming soon. Here at Trinity we have had a clothing exchange for some time and we are working to make it more accessible by moving it from Mrs. White's office to another more visible location near the foyer. Currently there are a large number of items of varied sizes in the clothing exchange. Please see Mrs. White for details. Also families who find the purchase of clothing a burden are invited to speak with Mrs. White. Resources to help with this expense have been offered in the last few weeks by members of our school community.

The Board reviewed two remaining concerns, the number of color choices and the lateness of the announcement. As a parent has pointed out, God has made a full rainbow of colors for us to enjoy. As a starting point at the Lower School we are beginning with four colors of polos for next year. Progressively more choices are seen as students progress through the stages of the trivium. Certainly all options of colors are open at the Middle and High School. We apologize for the timing of the announcement. New announcements are intended to come with reenrollment packets. Much time and discussion was involved in coming to a consensus but it was important to take the time necessary to make this decision. The Board decided that although the dress code information was a little late we felt it was better to move forward with this decision than to wait another year.

Thank you for your time reviewing our Lower School dress update. We appreciate our partnership with you in training and educating our children. By continuing to ask the Lord for wisdom in all decisions, by continuing to seek open communication with parents, students, teachers and administration, by outlining reasoning for decisions, and by responding to concerns, we want to clearly demonstrate that partnership with you is our priority. It is especially helpful when you follow verbal conversation with us in writing. This concrete form helps us to review concerns and ideas more effectively than spoken conversations alone. While we as a school body will continue to have varied positions on comparatively smaller concerns, we will continue to remain strongly united in pursuing our main purpose of growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ while teaching the art of learning. Please continue to communicate with us. It is our aim to serve the Lord by serving you as your school Board.

We look forward to a strong finish for this school year and a grand celebration with our 6th graduating class on May 23rd. May God grant all our school families a restful summer followed by an exciting start to a new year as we return in August.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors
Trinity Christian Academy