Makayla Burris

Gym Uniforms

Is the new requirement of gym uniforms going to cause more students to fail that particular course this year?

Administrators have changed the policy, so students have to pay $20 for gym uniforms. The expectations for this year are these: “Students are required to dress out in a South Pointe PE issued uniform every day. Students are considered dressed out by wearing the PE uniform, socks, and tennis shoes. NO sandals, flip flops, or Sperry’s are allowed in PE.”

Also, “Teacher(s) will deduct 5 points off the final participation and dressing out grade each time the student does not in the proper attire.”

One particular freshman, Madasia Burris, feels very strongly about the subject.

“It’s too much work because we have to come in here and change instead of using the clothes we already have on! It's unfair because we have to pay $20 for this unnecessary gym uniform,” Burris said.

Freshman Valarie Burke also has her opinion on this unfavorable situation as well.

“Uniforms are completely stupid. I don't think it is fair that we have to wear uniforms and two years ago others didn't,” Burke exclaims.

Physical Education teacher and football coach Jason McManus believes that the new policy will support our school code of ethics.

“I think it’s a really good thing because it feeds off of the South Pointe Way, which is Integrity, Community, and Excellence,” McManus said.

Head basketball Coach Stephanie Butler feels that uniforms are a necessity to identify students.

"It is a necessity, for the students to stay uniformed and also helps us identify students that aren't P.E students. It was something that we implemented because some of the students were wandering around gym area,” Butler said.

Also, changing into a gym uniform and then back out before going on to classes is good for the personal hygiene issue as well, she pointed out.

Despite the arguments P.E. teachers pose, students argue that not buying the uniform could lead to failing the course.

However, Coach Butler says differently. “No, they shouldn't fail; it's not the policy. Some kids are choosing not to dress out.”

Butler explains why the policy has changed since 2013 to 2015 and she says, “It was something that we implemented because some of the students were wandering around gym area. “

Assistant principal Elissa Cox also elucidated, “The gym uniform is not a new policy. It is considered to be a course cost much like the cost of a textbook for some courses or science lab material fees for other courses. Students are able to perform better when dressed appropriately just as there are appropriate dress requirements (close-toed shoes, etc.). Students do not fail the course for not wearing the uniform. Students fail the course when they do not demonstrate the assessed skills adequately or choose to not participate.”

Since the “Dress Out” and the “Participation” categories add up to 70 percent of the grade, a student could refuse to dress out all semester and fail the course. On the other hand, Butler says rental uniforms are available and students are encouraged to use them to avoid penalties.

What gym teachers are not going to do is allow a student to wear their own clothes anymore because of safety and identification issues. Butler pointed out when they tried to allow students to bring their own workout clothes, too many females tried to wear “booty” shorts and tank tops.

Assistant principal Michael Belk said he felt this way about gym uniforms: “I think it's a way to let us know that students are dressed out. We also make sure that everything we wear is in dress code. “

Despite what administrators and teachers say, students should be able to participate in any kind of clothing they choose, as long as they can safely do the activities assigned. Some students may not have enough money to purchase a gym uniform. Others just don't want one. More importantly, what about students who feel anxious over taking their clothes off in front of others to change? What about a student’s mental and emotional health; there are students who are not at all comfortable because of their body types wearing shorts or short-sleeved shirts.

Students should not have participation grades taken away from them because they do not want to dress out as long as they are wearing clothes safe enough to do the activities in.