

## STUDENT DECORUM POLICY

Jackson State University's core values include tradition, accountability, learning, nurturing, service, and responsibility. JSU believes that free expression is indispensable to the safeguarding of these values and that personal expression must be encouraged with only those limitations that are necessary to promote the University's mission for the benefit of all of its students.

The Jackson State University Student Handbook sets forth expectations and guidelines for appropriate student decorum, and this policy is put in place as a supplement to clarify and extend the dress code as well as the proscription against the use of inappropriate language. JSU is committed to fostering an educational environment that, consistent with its academic freedom and mission, prepares its students for success in the classroom and later in their careers. JSU may expect students to adhere to generally accepted standards of conduct. Actions that substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline or otherwise substantially interfere with the University's educational mission or the rights of other students may be regulated.

This Decorum Policy shall be applied without discrimination in regard to the viewpoint embodied in a student's dress or language, and it shall be applied to all students on an equal basis. Further, this policy is limited in time and place to University functions and educational facilities, specifically including classrooms. It is strongly encouraged, but not required, that these guidelines be followed elsewhere in an effort to provide a positive representation of ourselves and the University to the best of our abilities. Administrative, faculty, and staff members who observe student behavior proscribed by this Decorum Policy should report any such disregard or violations to the Offices of the Dean of Student Life.

### Prohibited Dress

Dress standards promote learning by establishing expectations that will reduce educational distractions as well as help prepare students for later success. These restrictions are minimum requirements that will result in a warning or disciplinary action if not followed. The University expects and strongly encourages its students to adhere to the higher standards of appropriate dress on campus and at University events as recommended in the Student Handbook.

Prohibited dress shall include all **lewd or obscene clothing and attire** as well as any clothing or gear that, in the view of the Dean of Students or Vice President of Academic Affairs, **substantially interferes with the effectiveness of the educational environment and mission.** Lewd or obscene dress shall include attire or the lack thereof that leaves visible an area of the body that traditionally within the locality has been considered private and indecent to expose publicly, and that also lacks artistic or creative value within a particular University curriculum. Traditional private areas shall mean the breasts, buttocks, or areas proximate to the reproductive organs. Dress or gear that substantially interferes with the educational environment may vary depending on the curriculum and context, but may include items that make distracting noises, such as music players, or attire that creates a visual obstruction to others. The only exemption to this dress code exists in the case of a student who, due to a medical condition or properly identified disability, requires such accommodation. Such accommodation, if reasonable, should be attempted with an effort to minimize any negative effect on the educational environment. This policy applies equally and without regard to the religious or secular nature of the attire.

Some examples of inappropriate dress and/or appearance include the following:

- Midriffs or halters, mesh, netted shirts, tube tops or cut-off t-shirts
- Short shorts
- Sagging or unbelted pants
- Do rags
- Clothing with words or images which are prohibited by this Decorum Policy
- Visible underclothing, including undershirts of any color, outside of the living quarters of the residence halls

### **Prohibited Language**

This policy does not prohibit language based on the expressive viewpoint of one's ideas, but rather proscribes certain language based on the disruptive or destructive manner and context in which such language is used.

**Lewdness, Obscenity.** Lewd and obscene language is prohibited.

**Fighting Words.** Language that by its very utterance tends to incite an immediate breach of the peace or imminent lawless action is prohibited. These words include those which when directed to the person of the hearer would naturally tend to provoke violent resentment. Such words also include those personally abusive epithets which, when addressed to the ordinary citizen, are, as a matter of common knowledge, inherently likely to provoke violent reaction.

**Profanity.** Profane, vulgar, and curse words are prohibited in limited contexts although their use is widely discouraged by the University. The proscription against profanity shall only regulate the manner of such speech rather than the content of any message conveyed. Profanity may subject a person to discipline when it lacks any artistic or literary value in connection with a University curriculum, it inherently tends to provoke a violent reaction, and it substantially interferes with the educational environment.

**Speech in violation of State or Federal Law.** Illegal speech is also prohibited. Language usage can violate specific laws depending on the context. Some examples of such laws include disturbing the peace, intimidation, stalking, harassment, defamation, or libel.

### **Litter-Free Campus**

Jackson State University takes great pride in the beauty of our campus. Littering is strictly prohibited and a violation of the University. Littering shall include, among other things, the throwing of debris such as cigarette butts, food wrappers, paper, cans, bottles, or other trash on the ground.

No student shall intentionally dispose of refuse of any kind in or near any building owned or operated by the University except in receptacles provided for that purpose. Intentionally discarding such will be seen and adjudicated as a violation of the University Littering Policy. Fines may be imposed in an amount not to exceed two hundred dollars (\$200.00).

**STUDENT DECORUM POLICY**  
**DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

When the Dean of Student Life deems that a student has violated the Student Decorum Policy, the following procedures will be implemented.

**Verbal Warning.**

A verbal warning will be given to the student by the faculty or staff member who reported the misconduct, and a written record of the incident will be given to the student as well as placed in the student's file. The student may provide a written response (of reasonable length) which reflects his or her view of the incident and such response shall also be included in the file.

**Informal or Student Life Disciplinary Hearing.**

If the verbal and written warning has no impact on a student's behavior and further violations occur, the student will be contacted by the Dean of Student Life or designee thereof in regard to an informal or formal hearing.

For allegations of misconduct of a less serious nature, the student will be summoned to appear before the Dean of Student Life for an informal hearing. The student will be allowed to know the allegations which he or she is accused of and be given an opportunity to respond. Based on the discretion of the Dean of Student Life, the student may be given a final warning or directed to attend counseling. If the Dean of Student Life believes that a fine, University service, probation, suspension, or expulsion is appropriate, the matter will be referred to the Student Life Disciplinary Committee ("SLDC") for adjudication. The SLDC shall hear all cases in which fines, University service, probation, suspension, or expulsion may be imposed. The SLDC may impose one of these actions only after the student has been informed of the allegations against him or her, and the student has been given a meaningful opportunity to explain why the allegations are incorrect or why a certain sanction is too harsh. An appeal from the SLDC for violations of this policy may be made in writing to the Dean of Students within two (2) days from the student's notification of the SLDC decision. The decision of the Dean of Students is final.

**NOTICE TO STUDENTS**

This Student Decorum Policy, including its Disciplinary Procedures, must be made available or disseminated in such a way to ensure that students receive notice of and access to this policy as well as information regarding the effective date from when it will be actively enforced.