



4 Laurel St. | Malden, MA 02148

May 12, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

You may have seen media coverage of our Uniform Policy as it relates to hair extensions, and I want to be sure that you have the facts.

We provide a world-class education to a diverse student body. We consistently rank among the top schools in Massachusetts in MCAS testing, SAT testing, and college admissions. The school sends students from all walks of life, including those of color and those from limited means, to the best colleges and universities in the nation.

One important reason for your children's success is that Mystic Valley purposefully promotes equity by focusing on what unites our students and by reducing visible gaps between those of different means. We foster a culture that emphasizes education rather than style, fashion, or materialism.

The rules on attire and appearance, which apply to all children and have been consistently enforced, are designed to support this philosophy. They are designed to permit students to focus their attentions on academics and on those aspects of their personalities that are truly important.

The specific prohibition on hair extensions, which are expensive and could serve as a differentiating factor between students from dissimilar socioeconomic backgrounds, is consistent with our desire to create such an educational environment, one that celebrates all that our students have in common and minimizes material differences and distractions. Any suggestion that it is based on anything else is simply wrong.

Media reports about our policy have contained numerous inaccuracies but, in addition to those outlined above, there are two glaring errors that demand a response. First, our Uniform Policy does not prohibit braids. Second, the school unequivocally did not "march" a group of students to the office.

Both the Uniform Policy and its Hair/Make-Up rules can be found in our *Parent/Student Handbook*, which is widely available, including online. It is agreed to by all students and parents through the compact that is signed each year. The handbook can be found at <https://goo.gl/44s49T>.

I would like to assure you that the school is in close communication with all students and parents who have expressed concern about the policy. The school has been thoughtful and consistent in discipline imposed for violation of our clearly stated policies. Thank you for your commitment to helping all students at Mystic Valley Regional Charter School achieve a superior education.

Sincerely,

Alexander J. Dan  
Interim School Director