

Updated CES Standards Help Students Grow Closer to Christ

Principle-based changes to Student Ecclesiastical Endorsements, the Honor Code, and Dress and Grooming Standards provide consistency across the Church Educational System

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The Church Board of Education of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has approved updates to Student Ecclesiastical Endorsements, the Honor Code, and Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations for the Church Educational System (CES).

The updates are principle-based, provide consistency across CES institutions, and better align student endorsement interviews with Church leaders' ecclesiastical responsibilities. The changes are designed to help students grow closer to Jesus Christ and strengthen the overall student experience.





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Hinckley Alumni House at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.



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Updates have been made in the following three areas:

1. The [**Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement**](#) elevates the student's interview by aligning it with the ecclesiastical responsibilities of priesthood leaders and focusing on a student's efforts to grow spiritually and meet ecclesiastical standards. Administration of university Honor Code and Dress and Grooming policies will now more fully reside with the CES institutions.
2. The [**CES Honor Code**](#) has been the same for all CES institutions for many years. Updates highlight its role in accomplishing the religious mission of CES.
3. [**Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations**](#) have historically varied among CES institutions and will now be simplified and unified across campuses. These updates identify a set of foundational principles while retaining an important set of common expectations.

“These changes will help everyone associated with CES further embrace the distinct purpose associated with CES institutions of higher education and to more fully accomplish our mission to develop disciples of Jesus Christ who are leaders in their homes, the Church, and their communities,” said Elder Clark G. Gilbert, the CES Commissioner of Education. “Our goal is that all students and employees feel the love of the Savior, experience the growth from applying

gospel principles, and more fully realize the joy associated with being part of a covenant-keeping community.”

CES conducted focus groups at several of its institutions to gather input from students in the development of these changes. Students were enthusiastic and expressed their feelings that a focus on the Savior, combined with an emphasis on principles and expectations, would elevate dress, grooming, and behavior as students become more intentional and take increased ownership for dress and grooming decisions.

After extended counseling together, CES presidents C. Shane Reese (Brigham Young University), Alvin F. Meredith III (BYU–Idaho), John S.K. Kauwe III (BYU–Hawaii), and Bruce C. Kusch (Ensign College) felt that the new updates would inspire both students and employees and add to the unity that is felt across CES. Student ecclesiastical endorsement interviews that are conducted on or after August 30, 2023, will proceed using the updated questions. Additionally, beginning August 30, 2023, the new CES Honor Code and the Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations will be fully implemented at Church-sponsored institutions. BYU–Pathway Worldwide and Seminaries and Institutes of Religion will continue to match Church dress and grooming standards as appropriate for local activities.

[FAQs are available](#) to answer more specific questions about these updates.

The updated Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement questions, the CES Honor Code, and the Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations are as follows:

Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement Questions

1. Are you striving to deepen your testimony of God, the Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost?
2. Are you striving to deepen your testimony of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

3. Are you striving for moral cleanliness in your thoughts and behavior?
4. Do you obey the law of chastity?
5. Do you sustain the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators?
6. Do you support or promote any teachings, practices, or doctrine contrary to those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?
7. Do you regularly participate in your church meetings and strive to keep the Sabbath day holy?
8. Do you strive to be honest in all that you do, including keeping the commitments you have made?
9. The Church Educational System is supported and funded by the tithes of the Church of Jesus Christ. Are you a full-tithe payer?
10. Do you obey the Word of Wisdom?
11. Are you striving to live the teachings of the Church and keep the covenants you have made to this point in your life?
12. Are there serious sins in your life that need to be resolved with priesthood authorities as part of your repentance?

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CES Honor Code

The Church Educational System (CES) is sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Church) and directed by the Church Board of Education/Boards of Trustees, with the mission to develop disciples of Jesus Christ who are leaders in their homes, the Church, and their communities. The CES Honor Code helps to accomplish the CES mission to build disciples of Jesus Christ. As faculty, administration, staff, and students voluntarily commit to

conduct their lives in accordance with the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, they strive to maintain the highest standards in their personal conduct regarding honor, integrity, morality, and consideration of others. By accepting appointment, continuing in employment, being admitted, or continuing enrollment, each member of the campus communities personally commits to observe the CES Honor Code approved by the Board of Trustees:

- Maintain an Ecclesiastical Endorsement, including striving to deepen faith and maintain gospel standards
- Be honest
- Live a chaste and virtuous life, including abstaining from sexual relations outside marriage between a man and a woman. Living a chaste and virtuous life also includes abstaining from same-sex romantic behavior
- Abstain from alcoholic beverages, tobacco, tea, coffee, vaping, marijuana, and other substance abuse
- Participate regularly in Church services
- Respect others, including the avoidance of profane and vulgar language
- Obey the law and follow campus policies, including the CES Dress and Grooming standards
- Encourage others in their commitment to comply with the Honor Code and Dress and Grooming standards

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CES Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations

CES Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations are part of the CES Honor Code and part of each student's, employee's, and volunteer's commitment.

When considering Honor Code and dress and grooming decisions, the teachings of the prophets and apostles, as well as Church instruction, such as “[For the Strength of Youth: A Guide for Making Choices](#)” can be helpful.

CES Dress and Grooming Principles

Each student, employee, and volunteer commits to:

1. Represent the Savior Jesus Christ, the Church, and the Church Educational System
2. Preserve an inspiring environment, without distraction or disruption, where covenants are kept in a spirit of unity so the Holy Ghost can teach truth
3. Promote modesty, cleanliness, neatness, and restraint in dress and grooming
4. Maintain an elevated standard distinctive to educational institutions of the Church of Jesus Christ

Dress and grooming expectations as in the examples below should align with these principles. However, application of these principles is not limited to the expectations listed. Members of the university community are expected to apply these principles to dress and grooming questions as they arise.

CES Dress and Grooming Expectations

1. Dress for men and women should:
 - a. Be modest in fit and style. Dressing in a way that would cover the temple garment is a good guideline, whether or not one has been endowed. Accommodation may be made for athletic participation.
 - b. Be neat and clean. Sloppy, overly casual, ragged, or extreme clothing is not acceptable.

2. Grooming

- a. Hair should be clean, neat, modest, and avoid extremes in styles and colors.
- b. Men's hair should be neatly trimmed. Men should be clean shaven. If worn, mustaches should be neatly trimmed.

NOTE: BYU-Pathway Worldwide and Seminaries and Institutes of Religion match local Church dress and grooming standards as appropriate for local activities.

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FAQs for Student Ecclesiastical Endorsements, the CES Honor Code, and Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations

The Church Board of Education of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced updates to the Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement, the Honor Code, and Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations for the Church Educational System (CES). These changes were made to help students draw closer to Jesus Christ and strengthen the overall student experience. These adjustments will:

1. adopt a principle-based approach, while retaining a set of common expectations;
2. simplify and unify dress and grooming principles and expectations across CES campuses;
3. better align the ecclesiastical endorsement interview with the ecclesiastical responsibilities of Church leaders.

The following are questions and answers about these updates.

How will the changes to the Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement questions contribute to the accomplishment of the mission of CES?

The Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement has historically emphasized the CES Honor Code and dress and grooming policies. This change better aligns the topics

addressed by Church leaders in their interviews with their core ecclesiastical responsibilities. Thus, as an ecclesiastical interview, it will focus on a student's efforts to grow spiritually and meet ecclesiastical expectations, which is an important part of accomplishing the religious mission of CES institutions. The administration of internal university policies, including the Honor Code and Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations, will now more fully reside with the CES institutions.

Why do the Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement questions differ from temple recommend questions?

There is a difference in the standard of worthiness to receive saving ordinances in the house of the Lord and being eligible to attend a CES institution as a student. The questions for temple recommend interviews and ecclesiastical endorsements are appropriate for their different purposes.

The Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement includes some questions about "striving." What is the intent of this language?

CES recognizes that students are striving to deepen their faith and testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Recognizing that we sometimes fall short of perfectly realizing these aspirations, and in order to encourage continued growth, students are invited to strive toward certain ideals while upholding foundational standards of conduct. As has happened prior to these changes, this allows ecclesiastical leaders to work with students who are trying but may sometimes struggle. It does not mean Church leaders should ignore clear violations of ecclesiastical standards, but it does allow them room to counsel with and help individuals progress.

What are the updates to the CES Honor Code?

The CES Honor Code has been and will continue to be consistent across CES campuses. Current adjustments emphasize the role of the Honor Code in

accomplishing the religious mission of CES institutions. The underlying principles and expectations have not changed.

Can you explain the changes to the Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations?

Previously, dress and grooming expectations varied across CES institutions. The new Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations identify an important set of foundational principles while retaining a set of common expectations to assist with the application of these principles. They also provide consistency between campuses.

Does the simplification of expectations and the inclusion of principles mean that other prior standards no longer apply?

In many cases, the prior expectations are still applicable. The Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations emphasize standards representative of Jesus Christ and CES and encourage modesty, cleanliness, neatness, and restraint. Students across CES campuses are expected to dress in ways that align with the dress and grooming principles.

Are there specific changes in dress and grooming now?

Yes. For example, students on each campus will be allowed to wear shorts, provided those shorts are in keeping with the principles and expectations given. As noted above, dress and grooming decisions should align with the Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations, and application of these principles is not limited to the expectations listed. We are striving to create a culture that is consistent with the distinct religious purpose of CES institutions.

What is meant by men's hair being "neatly trimmed?"

As stated in the Dress and Grooming Expectations, hair should be "neat, modest, and avoid extremes." The intent of this standard for men is that hair should be cut short and neatly trimmed.

Is there a change in the expectations for LGBTQ students?

There are no changes to the LGBTQ policies. CES is deeply committed to helping all our students, including our LGBTQ students, feel both the love and covenant expectations of the Savior. Same-sex romantic behavior has been and continues to be contrary to the principles included in the CES Honor Code. LGBTQ students are a welcomed and valued part of the campus community and share a common identity with every student as sons and daughters of God. All students will continue to be encouraged to live their gospel and university/college commitments.

Can members of CES campus communities who identify as LGBTQ or have same-sex attraction be disciplined for behavior like going on a date, holding hands or kissing?

Same-sex romantic behavior is not compatible with the principles included in the CES Honor Code. As in years past, each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis to help each student feel the love of the Savior and to encourage them to live their gospel covenants and university/college commitments.

Did students provide input on these updates?

Yes. CES conducted focus groups at Brigham Young University, BYU–Idaho, and Ensign College to review, discuss, and gather input from students in the development of these changes. The input of these randomly selected students was significant in developing and refining these updates. Students were enthusiastic about these adjustments and expressed their feelings that a focus on the Savior, combined with an emphasis on principles and expectations, would elevate dress, grooming, and behavior as students become more intentional and take increased ownership for dress and grooming decisions.

What is the timeline for implementation?

These updates will take effect on August 30, 2023.