



Administrative Procedure

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| Title: Appropriate Dress for Pupils | Procedure #: AP610-2 |
| Administrative Area: | Student Conduct and Safety |
| Policy Reference: | Code of Conduct (PO610) |
| Date Approved: | December 3, 2001 |
| Dates of Amendment: | October 2, 2017 |

1.0 **Purpose**

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to provide direction to principals on the creation and implementation of a school-level Dress Code as part of the School's Code of Conduct. A School Dress Code promotes a safe and respectful environment for teaching and learning.

2.0 **Definitions**

Appropriate Dress – the standard of student dress that meets the school community's expectations of modesty, decency, and neatness and promotes a safe and respectful learning environment.

Dress Code – the appropriate dress policy for students established by each school in consultation with parents through their school councils, and may include appropriate dress, uniform dress or school uniform.

Inappropriate Dress – a standard of attire which does not meet the school community standards of decency and includes language and/or representations on attire that indicates gang affiliation, that depicts violence, profanity, racial or gender discrimination or discrimination of any kind whatsoever, or that otherwise demeans an identifiable individual or group.

School Code of Conduct – clear standards of behaviour for all students whether they are on school property, on school buses, at school related events and activities or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate.

School Uniform – any common standard of attire with respect to colour and design which students are required to wear at school.

Uniform Dress – the standard of student dress consistent in style, colour and pieces (e.g., everyone wears a white shirt and black pants).

3.0 **Procedure**

3.1 **School Dress Codes for Students**

- 3.1.1 Every school must establish a Dress Code for students. It should be shared annually with parents and students (e.g., agenda, website, assemblies).
- 3.1.2 It is expected that every student in the school will comply with the Dress Code, except in specific circumstances, where the principal has permitted exceptions.
- 3.1.3 All Dress Codes must include a provision, which permits the Principal to exercise the discretion to allow exceptions to the school Dress Code.
- 3.1.4 Every school Dress Code must be consistent with both the spirit and letter of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. For instance, Dress Codes must be flexible enough to provide accommodation for religious dress in secondary schools.
- 3.1.5 A Dress Code may include a school uniform.

3.2 **Review and Monitoring of the Appropriate Dress for Pupils Procedure**

The school Dress Code as part of the Appropriate Dress for Pupils Procedure shall be reviewed at the school every three years in consultation with the Catholic School Council. The review shall have representation from students, teachers, staff and parents/guardians in the schools.

3.3 **Process to Change an Existing School Dress Code to Include a School Uniform or Uniform Dress**

In the event that a school uniform or uniform dress is proposed for a school where it has not previously existed, the approval of the change must follow the following process:

- 3.3.1 The proposed change may only be reviewed by the Catholic School Council as part of the three-year review cycle (see 3.2).
- 3.3.2 The Principal, in conjunction with the Catholic School Council, must survey the school community to determine if there is sufficient interest in the school community to proceed with a formal voting process (see Appendix 1-4).
 - 3.3.2.1 Each family will have the opportunity to provide one response to the survey (See Appendix 1 and 2).
 - 3.3.2.2 The survey results (regardless of how many are returned), must demonstrate that at least 51% of the total number of families are in favour of proceeding to a formal vote. Families that do not respond are counted as a “No, we are not interested” vote. Parents must be informed of the results following the initial survey (See Appendix 3 or 4).

3.0 **Procedure (cont'd)**

- 3.3.3 In preparation for the formal vote, the Principal, in conjunction with the Catholic School Council, should establish the parameters of the proposed standard dress, with consideration given to:
 - 3.3.3.1 Affordability.
 - 3.3.3.2 Ease of purchase from local vendors.
 - 3.3.3.3 Practicality and respect for the age, growth and developmental stages of children.
 - 3.3.3.4 Durability and ease of care.
 - 3.3.3.5 Respect for cultural norms within the school community.
 - 3.3.3.6 Alternative options for top-wear with at least two colour options (e.g., not white only).
 - 3.3.3.7 Inclusion of skirts, shorts and dresses.
 - 3.3.3.8 Seasonal temperature changes.
 - 3.3.3.9 Neatness and cleanliness.
 - 3.3.3.10 No restrictions regarding footwear.
 - 3.3.3.11 Inclusion of "Spirit Wear" as an acceptable option.
- 3.3.4 In preparation for the formal vote, the Principal in conjunction with the Catholic School Council, should establish the parameters of the formal vote:
 - 3.3.4.1 Clearly establish which families are eligible to vote (e.g., families with children who are only in grade 8 may be excluded).
 - 3.3.4.2 Entitle each family to a single vote; every opportunity should be provided for families to be able to vote.
 - 3.3.4.3 Provide each family with details of the proposed change, including the cost of each item.
 - 3.3.4.4 Identify the percentage of eligible families who must be in favour of the proposed change in order for it to be deemed approved with a minimum of 51% of families in the school who must vote. The percentage determined by a school must exceed two-thirds (67%).
 - 3.3.4.5 Identify that the percentage represents the total of eligible parents, not just those who vote. Families who do not vote will be counted as a "no" vote.
- 3.3.5 The process for the proposed change should commence no later than November 15th and must be completed by March 31st for implementation in September of the next school year. The communication plan must be shared with the Family of Schools Superintendent.
- 3.3.6 Once completed, the Dress Code is deemed in effect for three years and a new proposal cannot be brought forward within the three years.

3.0 Procedure (cont'd)

3.4 Compliance with the Appropriate Dress for Pupils Procedure

All students are expected to comply with the school plan for the implementation of the Appropriate Dress for Pupils Procedure. The implementation of the Dress Code shall be the first day of the school year. Progressive discipline consequences for students who do not comply with the Dress Code shall be established by the school and shall be a part of the School Code of Conduct.

3.4.1 Examples of a progressive discipline approach for non-compliance include but are not limited to:

- 3.4.1.1 Verbal reminders of expectations
- 3.4.1.2 Communication with parent/guardian
- 3.4.1.3 Written notification to parent/guardian by the Principal or designate outlining the Dress Code expectations.

4.0 Sources

- PPM128 – The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct
- Reg. 612/00 – School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees

5.0 Related Policies, Administrative Procedures and Appendices

- Code of Conduct Policy (PO610)
- Code of Conduct Administrative Procedure (AP610-1)
- Appendix 1 – Initial Letter
- Appendix 2 – Initial Survey
- Appendix 3 – Survey Results – Not Proceeding
- Appendix 4 – Survey Results – Proceeding to Next Step

Appendix 1 – Initial Letter

[Put on School Letterhead]

[Insert Date]

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As part of the School Code of Conduct, each school has a dress code for students. Every three years, the dress code must be reviewed in consultation with the Catholic School Council. This is the year that we will be reviewing the dress code.

Some parents have made a formal request to our Catholic School Council, that as part of the review cycle, our school community considers revising the dress code to include a standard uniform for all students.

The Durham Catholic District School Board has an administrative procedure that governs such a school level request. As per the procedure, there are three steps that a Catholic School Council must follow in order to make such a significant change to the school dress code.

Step One

The school community must be surveyed (one survey per family) to determine whether there is sufficient interest to proceed to Step Two. In order to proceed, the survey results must indicate that 51% of the potential votes are in favour of proceeding.

Step Two (if Step One is successful)

- a) *Investigation of a standardized uniform and communication of it to the school community*
- b) *The Principal, in consultation with the Catholic School Council, establishes the parameters for the formal vote.*

Step Three

The School community participates in a formal vote to determine whether or not the school proceeds with a change to the Dress Code.

Attached to this letter is the Step One survey question. Please return the survey to your youngest child's teacher by _____ [insert date] _____. The results of the survey will be communicated to the school community via a letter home to all parents and guardians.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Principal]

Appendix 2 – Initial Survey

Initial Survey for a Change to the Dress Code at
[Insert School]
for September [Insert Date]

Family Name: _____

| Student Name | Teacher |
|--------------|---------|
| | |
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Parents have requested that the Principal, in conjunction with the Catholic School Council, determine whether there is sufficient interest in pursuing a standard uniform dress for all students at [insert school name] for September [insert date].

☐ Yes, we are interested

☐ No, we are not interested

Appendix 3 – Survey Results – Not Proceeding

[Put on School Letterhead]

[Insert Date]

Dear Parents and Guardians:

I am writing to inform you of the results of our survey regarding interest in a school dress code that includes standard uniform dress.

The results of the survey were _____, which did not exceed the 51% threshold and as such the Catholic School Council will not be proceeding with the investigation into a standard uniform dress as part of the three-year review of the dress code.

Sincerely,

[Principal]

Appendix 4 – Survey Results – Proceeding to Next Step

[Put on School Letterhead]

[Insert Date]

Dear Parents and Guardians:

I am writing to inform you the results of our survey regarding interest in a school dress code that includes a standard uniform dress.

The results of the survey were _____, which exceeded the 51% threshold. As such, the Catholic School Council, in conjunction with the Principal, will determine a standard uniform dress, including the proposed costs. The Council will also develop the parameters of the formal vote, that will take place once all the specific details of the proposed dress code have been determined.

You will receive more communication in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

[Principal]