



Date of Issue	September 1, 2005
Original Date of Issue	September 26, 2001
Subject	DRESS CODE (SCHOOL) – DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES
References	<i>Education Act</i>
Links	FORM A7230 - 1
Contact	School Services

1. Background

It is recognized that an appropriate dress code in a school contributes to a safe and positive learning and teaching environment in which students demonstrate respect for themselves and others by taking pride in their appearance.

The Simcoe County District School Board and its schools have expectations regarding student dress. These may range from appropriate individual choice to mandated school uniforms.

Many schools have already implemented student dress codes in consultation with students, staff, parents and school council. These dress codes, subject to conformity with item 2.5, continue to be appropriate.

2. Procedures

2.1 Principals will continue to communicate the school's expectations regarding appropriate dress, to students, staff and parents on an annual basis.

When a significant change in expectations, which may include a school uniform, is being considered, the following procedures apply. A school uniform could mean prescribed colours such as blue pants/skirts and white shirts/blouses through to specifically designed and mandated uniforms.

2.2 The school council, in consultation with parents, may determine if there is interest in pursuing the issue. Methods of determination may include:

2.2.1 presentation(s) to the school council by parents, students and/or staff;

2.2.2 surveys (see FORM A7230 - 1);

2.2.3 discussions.



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- 2.3 If there is insufficient interest in making a change, the existing expectations will remain.
- 2.4 If as a result of 2.1, there is interest in studying this issue more formally, a process must be put into place to allow the school council to determine if the majority of parents are in favour of the proposed change.
- 2.4.1 If the change does not involve a mandated school uniform, the majority will be considered as 70% of the votes registered.
- 2.4.2 If the change involves a mandated school uniform, the majority will be considered as 90% of the votes registered.

In both cases a minimum return rate of 80% will be required. The proposed change must be outlined in detail for all parents.

Parents will be allowed one vote per family with children in the school.

Although the opinions of graduating students will be valued during deliberations, their parents will not have a vote unless they have another child(ren) attending the school.

If a majority is not reached, the issue will not be pursued again for two (2) years.

- 2.5 If a majority is reached, parents are enabled through the school council to decide on the appropriate dress code for the school. The school council in developing a school dress code should recognize that:
- 2.5.1 style of dress is an important expression of identity for young people and therefore the involvement of students in the process is prerequisite to successful implementation;
- 2.5.2 some forms of clothing may intimidate or offend others;
- 2.5.3 some styles of dress should be considered as a safety concern, particularly those, which conceal identity;
- 2.5.4 some styles of dress may distract others from their focus on learning;
- 2.5.5 clothing that promotes alcohol and/or other substance abuse or that displays sexual content, race or gender discrimination, profanity, violence



or other content, which in the judgement of the principal negatively affects the school's learning and teaching environment, is not appropriate.

- 2.6 The school council must be involved in the development and implementation of the policy, which shall include the following sections.
- 2.6.1 A statement of principles upon which the code is based will be part of the code (e.g. working towards a safer and more respectful learning and teaching environment).
- 2.6.2 Consistency with the *Human Rights Code* and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (e.g. religious beliefs) is essential.
- 2.6.3 Expectations for student compliance and resulting issues will be addressed by teachers and school administration through progressive discipline. In cases where the student's clothing is in violation of the dress code, the student will be requested to change. Conferences with students and/or parents will often clarify and resolve concerns. Where compliance issues reflect persistent opposition to authority or are injurious to the well-being of others and/or the moral tone of the school, the SCDSB Code of Conduct will apply.
- 2.6.4 The school council must address affordability issues and ensure, through the principal, access to uniforms for all students. No student shall be denied access to a uniform, nor subjected to any embarrassment because of an inability to pay. In such cases, the principal shall make arrangements. Any discussions between the principal and student or parent regarding finances shall be completely confidential.

Suggestions include but are not limited to the following:

- 2.6.4.1 discussion with the company providing the uniforms regarding discounts;
- 2.6.4.2 school council fundraising events to support provision of uniforms;
- 2.6.4.3 buy back plans;
- 2.6.4.4 uniform exchanges;
- 2.6.4.5 service club involvement.



Any such activities must be approved by the principal. If fundraising is involved, the activity must be included in the annual fundraising plan and funds are subject to established financial record keeping procedures.

- 2.6.5 An implementation timeline must be established. In schools where a school uniform is to be mandated, the process must be completed no later than the end of February, for implementation the next September. Individual school councils may consider a longer timeline based on local school situations.
- 2.6.6 If a school uniform policy is implemented the issue will not be reconsidered for a minimum of two years.
- 2.7 Where a family disagrees with the dress code and as a result chooses to have the student(s) attend another school, which is out of boundary, with approval of an out-of-attendance area form, transportation will not be provided.

First Issued: September 26, 2001
Revised: September 2005

Issued under the authority of the Director of Education

