



STUDENT DRESS

Responsibility:	<i>Superintendents, Student Achievement & Well-Being, Teaching and Learning and Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Department - Equity and Inclusion Branch</i>
Legal References:	<i>Education Act Ontario Human Rights Code 1962, 2013 Canadian Human Rights Act Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>
Related References:	<i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Ontario Human Rights Code 1962, 2013 Board Policy 1003 - School Councils <u>Board Policy 1012 - Religious & Creed Accommodation</u> <u>Board Policy 1017 - Human Rights</u> <u>Board Policy 1008 - Equity and Inclusion</u> <u>Faith and Religious Accommodations Administrative Procedure 1230</u> Policy 6000 - Safe Schools</i>
Effective Date:	<i>June 25, 2001</i>
Revisions:	<i>March 2020, June 2022</i>
Reviewed:	<i>November 2020, October 2021</i>

1. Guiding Principles

- 1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) is committed to fostering inclusive environments that are safe and equitable, and recognizes that decisions regarding dress are made with respect to individual expression, gender, cultural, creed and socio-economic needs, and are important to the overall health and well-being of an individual. Student dress guidelines should not reinforce or increase marginalization, oppression or discrimination of any individual.
- 1.2 "Student Dress" refers to all the ways a student may express themselves, including, but not limited to clothing, hairstyle, makeup, jewelry, and accessories.
- 1.3 Previously, student dress codes detrimentally impacted students who are female-identifying, Indigenous, Black, racialized, gender diverse, transgender and non-binary, and/or financially insecure, students with disabilities, and/or those experiencing other forms of marginalizations.
- 1.4 The Student Dress Policy is a crucial component of creating an anti-discriminatory and equitable environment.
- 1.5 This Policy is compliant with the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) and the Education Act, and is consistent with the WRDSB's Policy 1017 - Human Rights and Policy 1008 - Equity and Inclusion.

2. Purpose

This Policy establishes the student dress expectations for all schools, and aims to:

- 2.1 Recognize that students have the right to express themselves and dress comfortably without fear of discrimination and the responsibility to maintain a safe and respectful school environment.
- 2.2 Acknowledge that students and staff have a responsibility to maintain a safe and inclusive school learning environment.
- 2.3 Provide fair and equitable standards and guidelines for student dress.
- 2.4 Ensure that these standards and practices are student-centered and reflect the needs of our student body.
- 2.5 Acknowledge that dress plays a crucial role in how students explore self-identity, self-expression, and how they engage with others.
- 2.6 Recognize that students experience school as both a learning environment and a social environment.
- 2.7 Ensure that design, implementation, and administration of the student dress code is aligned with, and supports WRDSB commitment to anti-oppression, anti-racism, and creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment, which is in accordance with the OHRC and the WRDSB Equity and Inclusion, and Human Rights policies.

3. Shared Rights and Responsibilities

3.1 Students

- 3.1.1 The primary responsibility for student dress rests with the students themselves and their parents/guardians.
- 3.1.2 Students have the right to make decisions about their attire, and they can wear what makes them comfortable and allows them to express themselves (e.g., clothing, hairstyle, makeup, jewelry, etc.)
- 3.1.3 Students have the responsibility to respect the rights of others, and to help support a safe and shared environment in compliance with the Student Dress Policy.

3.2 Staff

- 3.2.1 Staff are responsible for ensuring that student dress does not interfere with student and staff health or safety requirements, and/or promote an offensive, hostile or intimidating environment.
- 3.2.2 Staff are responsible for ensuring the balance of student safety, health and well-being, and fostering a positive environment whilst also affirming and respecting student rights.

4. Student Dress

- 4.1 Students may attend school and school-related functions in dress of their choice, which is in accordance with the following system standards;
 - 4.1.1 Be worn in such a way that all bottom layers cover groin and buttocks and top layers cover nipples, both with opaque material

- 4.1.2 Tops may expose shoulders, abdomen, midriff, neck lines and/or cleavage
- 4.1.3 Bottoms may expose legs, thighs and hips
- 4.1.4 Undergarments (bras, underwear, nipple coverings etc.) may not be substituted as outer clothing and, if worn, should be worn beneath a layer of outer wear
- 4.1.5 Straps and waistbands may be exposed
- 4.1.6 Any headwear (e.g. hats, ski masks, baseball caps etc.) that does not hide the face may be worn.
- 4.1.7 Items related to creed and articles of faith are always permitted.
- 4.1.8 Conform with established health and safety requirements for the intended activity (e.g., health and physical education classes, science and chemistry classes, sporting events, technical education, drama/dance classes, etc.)
- 4.1.9 Respect the Board's intent to sustain a community that is positive, anti-oppressive, equitable, accepting and inclusive of a diverse range of social, cultural, and creed identities; Not promote offensive, lewd, vulgar, or obscene images or language, including profanity, hate and sexually explicit imagery;
- 4.1.10 Not promote, nor, could not be construed as or include content that is discriminatory (e.g., racist, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, sexist, transphobic, homophobic, classist, ableist, sizist, etc.), or that reasonably could be construed as defamatory, threatening, harassing or promoting bias, prejudice or hate;
- 4.1.11 Not symbolize, suggest, display or refer to: tobacco, cannabis, alcohol, drugs or related paraphernalia, promotion or incitement of violence or any illegal conduct or criminal activities;
- 4.1.12 Not interfere with the safe operation of the school, limit or restrict the rights of others, or create a reasonably foreseeable risk of such interference or invasion of rights; (e.g., except for creed accommodations and safety requirements, no head wear may obscure the face, all other headwear may be worn);

5. Discretionary Restrictions

- 5.1 Any restrictions to the way a student dresses must conform to the student dress policy and will be necessary to support the overall educational goals and activities of the school (e.g., bathing suits/ swimwear are restricted for pool/ swimming activities.)
- 5.2 Any discretionary exceptions to the student dress code must be authorized by the principal or designate and must be consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the OHRC, and the Equity Policy. (e.g., OHRC accommodation requests, sports equipment, Halloween costumes that obscure a face, etc.).

6. Human Rights Accommodations

- 6.1 The student dress policy must be implemented with every student in mind and result in barrier free access to the fullest extent possible
- 6.2 The Board is committed to providing individual human rights based accommodations (e.g., creed dress restrictions, gender expression, etc.) short of undue hardship. However, the standard design and application of the student dress code must be flexible enough to account for the diversity, accessibility, safety and dignity of all students up front, thus minimizing the need for individual accommodation requests to ensure inclusivity.

7. Commitments

- 7.1 Staff must be consistent and fair in application of the student dress policy and base decisions on objective, verifiable evidence of impact.

- 7.2 Staff will not use personal standards to alter the student dress policy.
- 7.3 The student dress policy will not be applied in a ways that lead to discriminatory outcomes, differential treatment or increased marginalization or oppression.
- 7.4 Student dress violations that threaten health and safety, and/ or promote violence, illegal activity, bullying, harassment, and/ or are motivated by the bias, prejudice or hate against any individual or identifiable groups, are serious violations of the Caring and Safe Schools Policy (P051) and must be responded to in accordance with policy procedures.
- 7.5 Staff will respond to student dress violations in a manner that:
 - 7.5.1 Treats violations (other than those listed in 7.4) as minor on the continuum of school rule violations.
 - 7.5.2 Ensures no student is negatively affected by dress code enforcement because of racial identity, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, creed beliefs, cultural or religious identity, disability, household income, body size/type/shape or any other grounds covered under the OHRC.
 - 7.5.3 Ensures consistent and fair application of the student dress code rules that never results in differential treatment.
 - 7.5.4 Ensures students are not body shamed or required to display their body in front of others (students, parents/guardians, or staff) in school.
 - 7.5.5 Does not require the removal of students from a classroom or a loss of class time as a consequence.
 - 7.5.6 Offers a continuum of choices to remedy any inappropriate dress:
 - 1) Ask the student to wear additional clothing of their own to hide the inappropriate dress choice;
 - 2) Allows the student to seek out and borrow additional clothing from a peer;
 - 3) Allows the student to contact parent or guardian to bring additional clothes;
 - 4) Allows the student to wear clothing provided by the school;
- 7.6 Students who refuse to comply with choices provided to remedy inappropriate dress and/ or who repeatedly violate the student dress may be subject to progressive discipline under Caring and Safe Schools Policy and must be responded to in accordance with this policy and associated procedures.

8. Concern or Complaint Resolution

- 8.1 For concerns or complaints related to student dress, students are encouraged to have discussions with staff. If students' concerns remain unresolved, they must be reviewed and responded to by the school principal and/or the superintendent in a timely manner.

9. Communication

- 9.1 The student dress policy will be clearly conveyed to students, parents/guardians and staff, clearly displayed in schools and posted online, printed in student agendas and highlighted in announcements and newsletters for clear reminders.