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| Date of issue | October 2023 |
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| Subject | STUDENT DRESS CODE |
| References | Policy 3130 – Equity and Inclusive Education Policy 4240 – Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools APM A7125 – Equity and Inclusive Education APM A7630 – Code of Conduct Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Ontario Human Rights Code Safe Schools Act |
| Contact | School Services/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion |

1. Background

It is recognized that an appropriate dress code in a school contributes to a safe and positive learning and teaching environment.

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) has expectations regarding student dress. These may range from appropriate individual choices to the possibility of school uniforms.

2. Guiding principles

- 2.1 The SCDSB Student Dress Code reflects the following principles:
 - 2.1.1 consistency with the *Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (e.g., religious beliefs) is essential;
 - 2.1.2 dress codes must be applied equitably and consistently to all students and reflect ministry and board documents, *Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario*, *Safe Schools Act*, and *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools*.
 - 2.1.3 styles of dress should not create a concern for safety, nor obscure the face, subject to human rights-related needs and accommodations; and,
 - 2.1.4 this SCDSB Student Dress Code applies to all SCDSB schools, sites, sporting events, activities, field trips, and international field trips which are under the direct supervision of SCDSB staff and attended by SCDSB students.

3. Dress code

- 3.1 Principals will review the SCDSB Student Dress Code annually with staff, students, and parents/guardians. The dress code expectations shall be communicated to the school community through a variety of channels (e.g., assemblies, the student handbook, the school code of conduct, the school website) throughout the year as

events and circumstances require.

- 3.2 The SCDSB Student Dress Code prohibits clothing that bears content (either image or text) which:
 - 3.2.1 is discriminatory toward an individual or group based on ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status;
 - 3.2.2 promotes alcohol and/or substance use/abuse; and,
 - 3.2.3 is violent, profane, or contains sexually explicit language.

4. School uniform

- 4.1 A school uniform could mean prescribed colours such as blue pants/skirts and white shirts/blouses through to specifically designed and mandated uniforms.
- 4.2 The school council may advise the principal if there is interest in pursuing changes to the current dress code that involves the introduction of uniforms. Methods of determining interest shall include:
 - 4.2.1 presentation(s) to the school council by parents/guardians, students, and/or staff;
 - 4.2.2 surveys (e.g., parents/guardians, students, staff); and,
 - 4.2.3 discussions.
- 4.3 Should the principal determine that there is sufficient interest in pursuing a school uniform, a formal survey process must be put in place. The survey shall follow these guidelines:
 - 4.3.1 the proposed change must be outlined in detail for all parents;
 - 4.3.2 parents/guardians will be allowed one vote per family with children in the school; and,
 - 4.3.3 parents/guardians of graduating students are only eligible to vote if they have another child(ren) attending the school.
- 4.4 In order to affect the implementation of a school uniform, the following thresholds shall apply:
 - 4.4.1 75 per cent survey return rate by eligible parents/guardians of students in the school; and,
 - 4.4.2 75 per cent of the survey responses favour the proposed uniform.
- 4.5 If the thresholds outlined in 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 are not reached, the issue will not be pursued again for at least two years.
- 4.6 An implementation timeline must be established. In schools where a school uniform is to be mandated, the survey process must be completed by the end of February for implementation the following September. Individual school councils may consider a longer timeline based on local school situations.
- 4.7 Should the principal determine that there is sufficient interest in a school uniform, the school shall engage various groups with diverse identities and needs (e.g., ethnocultural, religious, 2SLGBTQ, etc.) in discussions of proposed uniforms.
- 4.8 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 embarrassment because of an inability to pay. In such cases, the principal shall make arrangements. Any discussions between the principal and student or parent/guardian regarding finances shall be completely confidential.

- 4.9 If school uniforms are already in place and the school community wishes to discontinue their use, the process and thresholds detailed in 4.3 and 4.4 will be followed.
- 4.10 Where a family disagrees with the implementation of a school uniform, or the discontinuation of a school uniform, and as a result, chooses to have their children attend another school, they will need to follow the out-of-attendance area requests process. If their request is approved, transportation will not be provided.

5. Compliance

Teachers and school administration will address expectations for student compliance and resulting issues 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/guardians 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.

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