

School Uniform Dress Code/School Dress Code	
Adopted: April 14, 2009	Last Reviewed/Revised: February 6, 2018
Next Scheduled Review: 2020-2021	
Associated Policies & Procedures: I-31 Apparel Purchases and Fair Labour Practices; II-39 Progressive Discipline & Safety in Schools Code of Conduct – Suspensions & Expulsions	

Purpose

To promote, through the implementation of a school uniform dress code or a school dress code, a safe and positive learning environment consistent with the mission and governing values of the Halton Catholic District School Board.

Application and Scope

This policy applies to all students under the jurisdiction of the Halton Catholic District School Board.

References

[Education Act of Ontario, Regulation 298](#)

[Human Rights Code](#)

Definitions

A school uniform dress code is defined as the standard of prescribed student dress, developed in consultation with the school community, specifying clothing that must be purchased from approved uniform suppliers, and may include guidelines as to when and how particular items can be worn.

Student dress code is defined as the standard of student dress established in consultation with the school community, consistent with the Board Policy and the Education Act and Regulations, required of students in elementary schools that have chosen not to implement a school uniform dress code.

Principles

- A school uniform dress code or a student dress code reflects the distinctively Catholic character of our schools and supports the development of attitudes consistent with Catholic teaching.
- The Board is committed to providing a learning and working environment that is safe and respectful of the needs and well-being of all individuals, and believes that a school uniform dress code supports such environments.
- The Board endorses and encourages the adoption of a school uniform dress code in our elementary schools, consistent with the values, traditions and distinctiveness of Catholic schools as an effective strategy to build inclusive Catholic communities and encourage a sense of belonging for all students.
- The Board affirms a role for parents to determine, through democratic vote conducted in accordance with this policy, whether or not to adopt and implement a school uniform dress code for elementary school communities.
- The Board requires the adoption of a student dress code, consistent with the values, traditions, distinctiveness of Catholic schools, and the requirements of this policy, in each elementary school community that votes not to adopt and implement a school uniform dress code.
- The Board requires the adoption and implementation of a school uniform dress code in each secondary school, consistent with the values, traditions and distinctiveness of Catholic schools.
- The Board recognizes there is a shared responsibility for meeting the expectations of the School uniform dress code or student dress code.
- The primary responsibility for the consistent enforcement of the School uniform dress code or student dress code is that of the principal, and school staff are expected to support the consistent implementation of such uniform dress codes.
- The Board recognizes that circumstances may require schools to access assistance for individual families with the purchase of uniforms.
- The Board recognizes the necessity of a school dress code for those times when students are not in uniform (i.e. civvies day, elementary physical educational classes). Any action taken to implement the requirements of this policy, including the application of supports and consequences to students must be consistent with the Requirements of Policy II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools (2012).
- The policy shall be in accordance with provisions of the Education Act, Regulation 298, the Human Rights Code, Board Operating Policy I-31 Apparel Purchases and Fair Labour Practices and the governing values of the Halton Catholic District School Board.

Requirements

GENERAL:

All elementary schools shall adopt either a School Uniform Dress Code or a School Dress Code for students in keeping with the Board's Mission Statement, governing values and Catholic social teaching.

All secondary schools shall adopt a School Uniform Dress Code.

A school uniform assistance program shall be in place, in each school, to ensure that access to discreet and confidential assistance, through the School Principal, is available for families that have difficulty purchasing the uniform due to financial hardship.

A. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL UNIFORM DRESS CODE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:

1. A prescribed process for local decision making shall ensure that parents/guardians of students in each elementary school may determine whether an elementary school community adopts and implements a school uniform dress code. In accordance with this policy, each elementary school shall conduct a vote on whether to adopt a school uniform dress code at least once.
2. The principal of each school shall be responsible for ensuring that a community vote is conducted, in accordance with this policy, to consider the adoption and implementation of a school uniform dress code. Approval to proceed with implementation requires a simple majority (50% plus one) of those ballots cast have been marked indicating a "YES" vote.
3. Upon achieving the required approval as described above (50% plus one), all students registered in the elementary school shall wear the school uniform dress code. Any action taken to implement the requirements of this policy, including the application of supports or consequences to students must be consistent with the Requirements of Policy II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools.
4. Should a school uniform dress code not be adopted after the voting process, no renewed process will be initiated for at least three (3) years. A Student Dress Code shall be established, and implemented in accordance with this policy.
5. At least once annually, at a Catholic School Council meeting, the Principal shall review the school uniform dress code and school dress code. This review may include approval of uniform pieces, the monitoring and enforcement of the school uniform dress code and school dress code, stakeholder consultation (i.e. student, staff, greater school community), approved civvies days/spirit days.
6. In schools that have chosen not to implement a school uniform, the school dress code committee will be established to monitor and review the implementation of the school dress code, and consider the interest in school uniforms.
7. The review may include a process for consultation with students, teachers and staff working in schools, parents and guardians, and school councils.

8. Following the review process outlined above, and upon the requirements of the Catholic School Council, an elementary school community may choose to conduct a vote in accordance to this policy, to adopt a school uniform if they have not yet done so.
9. Similarly, an elementary school that has previously chosen to adopt a school uniform may follow the same review process, and upon the recommendation of the Catholic School Council, may choose to conduct a vote in accordance with this policy to discontinue the implementation of a school uniform.
10. The principal of an elementary school, together with the Catholic School Council will oversee the process of voting on the adoption of a school uniform dress code. Elementary schools considering the adoption of a school uniform dress code shall:
 - a. inform the appropriate Superintendent;
 - b. establish a representative committee including parents, staff and students to explore the implication of introducing a school uniform dress code. The committee must prepare an Action Plan to be distributed prior to a community information night.
 - c. the following components of the Action Plan will be consistent from school to school:

COMMUNICATION PLAN – includes methods of communicating the Action Plan and subsequent community information meeting, notice of vote, voting results, implementation timelines and data collection through newsletters, school websites, and other means as appropriate. The School Uniform Dress Code Policy must be communicated.

THE UNIFORM SUPPLIER:

- Elementary schools must use the Board's authorized uniform supplier.
- The method of selecting a provider through the RFP process will take place every three (3) years and will include participation by Board staff, as appointed by the Director of Education. At least three (3) members of CPIC (Catholic Parent Involvement Committee) will be involved in establishing the criteria for the RFP process.
- The selection criteria to determine the authorized uniform suppliers must include affordability, accessibility and convenience, quality, support for equity and availability of subsidies/family assistance, and compliance with Board Policy I-31 Apparel Purchases and Fair Labour Practices.

THE UNIFORM:

- The uniform colours at all elementary schools will consist of a combination of navy blue and white only. To supplement the base uniform, individual schools may choose to add additional items of uniform apparel (sweaters, vests, etc.) that may also reflect a school's colour (one colour).
- Only a school logo/name shall be permitted on school uniforms. Advertisements of any kind on school uniforms is prohibited.
- Any clothing item worn under uniform pieces, but still visible must be in compliance with

school dress codes, and generally, will be in the school uniform colours or white (i.e. undershirts, tights or socks).

- No student will be denied access to school as a result of inability to afford appropriate clothing required by a school's uniform dress code policy. A process must be in place to address this issue.
- A school's approved uniform pieces shall be reviewed/monitored every year by the principal and Catholic School Council members.
- The following components will be up to the discretion of the principal and the Catholic School Council:
 - Type and styles of clothing from the chosen uniform provider;
 - A strategy for Non Uniform Days or Civvies Days.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING:

- The principal shall ensure the distribution of the Action Plan to parents prior to the community information meeting, and the information meeting will take place prior to the voting process.

ELEMENTARY VOTING PROCEDURES/BALLOT QUESTION:

- **SCHOOL VOTES SHOULD BE CONDUCTED IN FEBRUARY OR MARCH.**
- Every registered family with children in JK – 6 of the current school year is eligible to vote, and receives one (1) vote (ballot).
- Every family with children confirmed as pre-registered for the next school year (JK/Early Learning/French Immersion, etc.) is eligible to vote, and receives one (1) vote (ballot).
- Families of students with Children only in grade 7 or 8 in the current year are not eligible to vote. In the event that a School Uniform Dress Code is adopted for the following school year, grade eight students in the initial year of implementation are encouraged to wear the school uniform, but compliance is not compulsory.
- The ballot sample is provided in Appendix A. The ballots shall be numbered to ensure that there is one ballot provided for each family in the school community.
- Members of the School Uniform Dress Code Committee may initiate calls/reminders to families to remind them of the ballot due dates only.
- Only original ballots will be accepted (no telephone or verbal voting). A ballot signed solely by a student will be considered a void ballot.
- No proxy voting.
- It is recommended that the voting process be completed by March 30th in order for successful implementation in the following school year and include all families registered at the school for September of the next school year.
- The voting process must not exceed two (2) calendar weeks but cannot be completed sooner than one (1) week following the community information night.

- The Principal, in collaboration with the Catholic School Council shall communicate the ballot results to the school community no later than one (1) week after the vote occurs. Ballots will be stored at the school for a minimum of three (3) years.

SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION/CLOSURE:

- Elementary schools involved in school consolidation/closure where all, or some, of the schools have previously implemented a school uniform will be required to go through the following process **during the transition year (year prior to consolidating)**:
 - A community information meeting
 - Voting procedures followed as above for all families in the boundaries of the new consolidated school
 - If vote determines that the new consolidated school shall implement a uniform, grandfathering of the previous uniform pieces will occur for three (3) years
 - **IN THE INITIAL YEAR, GRADE 8 STUDENTS WILL HAVE THE OPTION OF WEARING THE SCHOOL UNIFORM**
 - An appropriate logo for the new consolidated school will be determined after the school name is decided

NEW SCHOOL:

- A new Elementary School will initiate the school uniform implementation process in their first year of existence
- If the vote determines that a school uniform shall be implemented, grandfathering of uniforms that existed at schools that created the boundaries of the new school will occur for three (3) years

B. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DRESS CODE:

- All elementary schools must adopt an elementary school dress code even if they have implemented an Elementary School Uniform Dress Code.
- An elementary school's student dress code shall be in keeping with our Catholic teachings and beliefs, and reflect principals of modesty. Criteria to be used in developing the student dress codes includes:
 - safety conditions
 - maintenance of proper decorum
 - modesty
 - cleanliness
 - neatness
 - appropriateness in relation to the activity in keeping with Catholic values

Non-compliance to a Student Dress Code may include but is not limited to logos, sayings and pictures that address/display:

- sexual content
 - substance abuse
 - violence
 - profanity
 - inappropriate references to nationality, race or gender
- Parents are encouraged to be involved and active in the decision-making process through their Catholic School Councils in consultation with the principal and school staff.
 - Each school will annually review the school's dress code. This review process shall include consultation with students, school staff, parents and other stakeholders as appropriate.
 - A copy of the school's dress code will be included annually in the school's School Agenda Book, September newsletter and on the school's website.
 - Students will be expected to observe all aspects of the dress code. School staff and parents will be expected to support its consistent implementation.
 - Any action taken to implement the requirements of this policy, including the application of consequences to students or direction to visitors to the school grounds or property, must be consistent with the requirements of Policy II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools.
 - The principal of each school has the discretion to determine whether a student is in violation of the School Uniform Dress Code or the School Dress Code, has responsibility to enforce the school uniform dress code/school dress code policy, and has the authority to implement the requirements of this policy, including any supports or consequences to students.
 - School staff are expected to support the consistent implementation of a school uniform dress code, or school dress code, in accordance with the local school code of conduct.

C. SECONDARY SCHOOL UNIFORM DRESS CODE:

- A secondary school's uniform shall be in keeping with our Catholic teaching.
- Each school will review the present uniform policy in accordance with the Appropriate Dress Guidelines from the Ministry. This review process shall include consultation with students, school staff, parents and guardians. Once established, the policy will be reviewed annually or as needed at the discretion of the school community.
- Only a school logo/name shall be permitted on school uniforms. Advertisements of any kind on school uniforms are prohibited.
- Any action taken to implement the requirements of this policy, including the application of consequences to students or direction to visitors to the school grounds or property, must be consistent with the requirements of Operating Policy II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools.

- The Board recognizes the necessity of a school dress code for those times when students are not in uniform (i.e. civvies day). Any action taken to implement the requirements of this policy, including the application of supports and consequences to students must be consistent with the Requirements of Operating Policy II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools (2012).
- On days when students are not in uniform (i.e. civvies day), Principals will ensure that a school dress code is communicated and applied to all students.
- A copy of the school's uniform dress code will be included annually in the school's School Agenda Book or on the school's website.