PROCEDURE SO-045

STUDENT DRESS CODE	
Superintendent Responsible: Superintendent of Education, Secondary Schools	**Initial Effective Date:** 2019/05/27
Last Updated: 2026/11/13 For those codes that are currently in place, effective June 1, 2024, this procedure shall apply.	**Next Review Date:** 2030/02/25

Purpose

To provide students with learning environments that are equitable, inclusive and responsive for each learner, and to recognize that decisions about dress reflect an individual's expression of identity, culture and economic factors.

Historically, school dress codes have enforced ways that disproportionately and negatively impact: female-identified students, racialized students, gender diverse, transgender and non-binary students, students with disabilities, socioeconomically marginalized students and Indigenous, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students. To support a positive and inclusive environment, action is required to challenge and overcome this history. Students have the right to express themselves, feel comfortable in what they wear and the freedom to make choices about their appearance while ensuring schools are safe, welcoming and respectful.

1.0 **Guiding Principles**

1.1 To establish fair and equitable standards and practices for student dress.

1.2 To ensure that these standards and practices centre student engagement and student voice

1.3 To recognize that students have both the right to express themselves and the shared responsibility to maintain equitable, inclusive and responsive environments.

1.4 To ensure that students feel they are heard, seen and belong, and that they are safe and included in their individuality.

1.5 To recognize that dress plays a fundamental role in how students build healthy relationships and explore self-identity.

1.6 To have discussions with students about dress code, including dress code contraventions in a way that preserves dignity and self-respect

1.7 To ensure that the design, application and enforcement of the student dress code does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any individual or group based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, family status or disability (Ontario Human Rights Code).

2.0 **Responsibility**

2.1 The school Administrator(s) is responsible for:

- Adopting this procedure as the school dress code;
- Determination whether student dress represents a contravention of this process;
- Addressing requests for dress related accommodations based on any of the protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- Consulting with the school council and school community, including students, throughout the process of instituting a student School dress code, where applicable (Ontario Regulation 612/00. S. 19(1)); and
- Consult with Family of Schools Superintendent around areas of clarification.

2.2 Safe and Inclusive Schools department is responsible for:
- Seeking external advice:
- Providing learning opportunities for students, parent(s)/Caregiver(s):
- Providing support for accommodations: and
- Providing support for concerns of discrimination.

2.3 School staff are responsible for:
- Educating students about the student dress code;
- Communicating specific requirements for student dress where there are health and safety requirements related to the use of equipment and/or activities; and
- Reporting dress code violations to Administrator(s) in a non-discriminatory manner.

2.4 The School Council is responsible for:
- Consulting with the school community, including students, where a student School Uniform dress code is contemplated; and
- Where a student School Uniform dress code is established, ensuring equity and affordability issues are addressed in partnership with the Administrator(s).

3.0 **Student dress Standards**

All students have the right to express themselves through their dress without fear of body-shaming, bias, or discrimination. Student dress must:
- Cover the groin, buttocks and nipples with opaque material;
- Wear undergarments, if worn, beneath a layer of outer wear;
- Include footwear with consideration for health and safety;
- Ensure that the student's face is not fully obscured;
- Not include anything that reasonably could be construed as promoting or symbolizing hate or discrimination, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, illegal activity, profanity, nudity, pornography; or that incites violence or harassment; or threatens health and safety; and
- Comply with all health and safety related dress requirements associated with a particular class, school activity, or school function. This may include, but is not limited to restrictions regarding footwear, loose clothing, jewelry, personal protective equipment, or other specialized equipment specific to the activity.

4.0 **Request for Accommodation**

4.1 Requests for accommodation may be submitted to the Administrator(s). When there is a duty to accommodate, accommodation will be provided, to the point of undue hardship.

4.1.1 Submissions to the Administrator(s) may include:
- Reason for accommodation needed: and
- Duration, if applicable.

4.2 The Administrator(s) will consider requests for accommodation on student dress on a case-by-case basis, in a timely manner, and will collaborate with the student and/or their parent/caregiver throughout the process; and

4.3 The Administrator(s) will provide the student and/or their parent/caregiver with the final decision, including rationale.

5.0 **Contraventions of the dress Code**

5.1 Should a contravention in student dress occur, it will be addressed equitably, with consideration for the student's race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, family status or disability, and/or body type/size, with consideration of context for the activity.

5.2 Where a student is considered to be in contravention of the dress requirement, the student will be:
- Asked to change, remove, or cover the clothing item that violates this procedure;
- Asked to wear the required personal protective equipment, when applicable;
- Required a change of clothes only if this will not result in missing instructional time (i.e. connecting with parent(s)/caregiver(s) to bring in alternative dress); or
- Subject to any other step an Administrator(s) considers appropriate in these circumstances.

5.3 Where a student demonstrates non-compliance with the dress code requirements, corrective action may be taken in accordance with progressive discipline.

5.3.1 Where suspension is being considered as part of progressive discipline, the Administrator(s) shall consult with the Family of Schools Superintendent prior to making a decision to suspend a student in relation to dress code.

6.0 **Communication**

6.1 The student dress code must be available to each student, parent/caregiver, at the beginning of each school year and whenever a student registers at the school.

6.2 On-going education about the dress code may include topics of harassment, discrimination, sexism, human rights, and diversity in order to minimize the need for monitoring student dress to the minimal extent possible and to encourage a safe, respectful learning environment.

Reference(s):
- Grand Erie's Inclusive Language Guide
- Ontario Regulation 612/00. S. 19(1)
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Grand Erie's Equity Action Plan
- Grand Erie's Inclusive Language Guide