



Learning Environment

Appropriate Dress for Students

Policy Number LE-03

The Appropriate Dress Policy for Students of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board reflect the mission of the Board to provide “learning environments that are safe, nurturing, positive and respectful” The Policy forms part of the Board’s wider commitment to promoting safe, nurturing, positive and respective learning environments and safe schools. The Board requires the use of school uniforms for secondary school students, while still enabling parents the most economical means of providing clothing and respecting their right to have some freedom of choice. The Policy also demonstrates the Board’s commitment to involve parents and guardians, through Catholic School Community Councils, in the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement and/or to the accountability of the education system.

In compliance with provisions of the Education Act, Regulation 298 and the Safe Schools Act, all schools within the jurisdiction of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board shall adopt an appropriate dress code for students. The student dress code shall be in keeping with the Board’s Mission and Vision Statements, Statement of Purpose, traditions and distinctiveness of Catholic schools.

Procedural Guidelines Follow

Statement Number SO 8-01
Revised:

“Appropriate Dress Policy for Students”
Board Meeting #05 (Wednesday, March 22, 2017)

Procedures and Guidelines Supporting Policy Number LE-03 Appropriate Dress for Students

Introduction

The Policy and these Guidelines have been developed in light of a number of recent legislative, regulatory and policy initiatives introduced by Provincial Government. The Safe Schools Act, 2000, sub-section 302(5) requires school boards to establish policies and guidelines respecting appropriate dress for students within their jurisdiction when required to do so by the Minister of Education. The School Councils Regulation requires school boards to solicit the views of school councils with respect to implementation plans for policies and guidelines respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within school board jurisdictions.

Statement of Principles

An appropriate school dress policy, supported by a majority of parents, and in consultation with staff and students, should lead to a safe and more respectful learning and teaching environment. Each school, in consultation with its school council, staff and students, is encouraged to develop a dress policy for students that is appropriate for that school. Such dress policies shall be based on principles such as respect and safety. Any school dress policy for students must integrate the principles of fairness, equity and inclusion.

Definitions

“Dress Code” is the appropriate dress policy for students established by each school in consultation with parents through their school councils, and may include a school uniform.

“Inappropriate Dress” refers to a standard of attire which does not meet the school community standards of decency and shall include language and/or representations on attire that indicates gang affiliation, that depicts violence, profanity, racial or gender discrimination or discrimination of any kind whatsoever, or that otherwise demeans an identifiable individual or group.

“School Uniform” refers to any common standard of attire with respect to colour and design which students are required to wear at school.

School Dress Codes for Students

Every school must establish a Dress Code for Students.

Each Dress Code must include a statement of principles upon which it is based.

It is expected that, subject to the discretion of the principal to permit exceptions regarding compliance in appropriate circumstances, every student in the school will comply with the Dress Code.

School Dress Codes must be consistent with both the spirit and letter of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. For instance, Dress Codes must be flexible enough to provide accommodation for religious dress in Secondary Schools.

All Dress Codes must include a provision, which permits the principal to exercise the discretion to allow exceptions to the school Dress Code.

Each Dress Code shall include a description of Inappropriate Dress. Such a description shall include attire that is defined by these Guidelines as inappropriate dress and may include any other attire or dress that is considered inappropriate in specific schools.

A Dress Code may include a School Uniform.

Dress Codes shall include a provision respecting periodic review and monitoring. The periodic review shall include a process for consultation with students, teachers, staff, volunteers working in the schools, parents and guardians, school councils and the public.

Approval Process

Each school will establish a process that enables a majority of parents, through their school councils, to decide on what an appropriate Dress Code for Students should be for their own schools. School councils must be involved in the development and implementation of that process. Such process shall:

- (a) provide for a vote;
- (b) permit a majority of 50% of the parents who vote to determine the Dress Code in each school;
- (c) clearly establish which parents are eligible to vote; and



(d) entitle each family to a single vote.

In the event that a School Uniform is proposed, the approval process shall:

- (a) provide for a vote;
- (b) permit a majority of 55% of the parents who vote to determine the whether the Dress Code will include a School Uniform.
- (c) clearly establish which parents are eligible to vote;
- (d) entitle each family to a single vote;
- (e) clearly detail the costs of a School Uniform; and
- (f) Clearly identify the implementation process prior to the vote.

Affordability

Each school, in developing a Dress Code for Students, must consider issues of affordability. No school shall introduce a Dress Code that creates a financial hardship for any parents. Each Dress Code shall provide a process to address issues of affordability.