

SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Section SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

Policy Name *STUDENT DRESS CODE*

548

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Reviewed: June 11, 2024

Review By: December 2029

POLICY

Superior-Greenstone District School Board (SGDSB) is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe and secure environment for its students, staff, and community where all members of the school community are to be treated with respect and dignity in alignment with the principles of equity, the Ontario Human Rights Code, SGDSB *Policy 520 – Student Code of Conduct*, and SGDSB *Policy 717 - Human Rights & Harassment*.

It is the policy of SGDSB that students must be dressed in ways that are consistent with the board's goal in promoting a safe, secure, and equitable learning environment. This policy outlines and establishes the standards for student dress codes in all schools in accordance with all relevant legislation and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

SGDSB endeavors to provide human rights-based accommodations to this policy for all students, short of undue hardship.

RATIONALE

Superior Greenstone District School Board is committed to the success of every student. A school is a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility, and academic excellence in a safe, nurturing, and welcoming learning environment.

A positive school climate exists when all members of the community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted. Staff, students, parents/guardians, school councils and community members work in a cooperative partnership and must share the responsibility for creating and maintaining such an environment.

The board recognizes that individual expressions of identity and being able to affirm identity through attire are important factors to an individual's health and well-being. Similarly, the board recognizes that school dress codes have disproportionately impacted students from rights-inherent and equity-deserving backgrounds, such as racialized students and female-identified students. As such, this policy draws upon collective principles of human rights, equity, anti-oppression, and inclusion.

1 Guiding Principles

1.1 Students may attend school and school-related functions, either on or off school property, in the attire of their choice that falls within the following board standards:

1.1.1 Clothing, accessories, and shoes must be suitable for school and school related activities. Restrictions to the dress code may be imposed by the Principal of the school to meet the overall goals of education or education-

related activities, or to ensure optimal health and safety requirements. For example, a principal may require a student to wear appropriate footwear to participate in outdoor activities.

- 1.1.2 Clothing must be worn in ways that cover the groin area, buttocks, and nipples with opaque fabric:
 - i. Tops may expose the shoulders, abdomen, midsection, neckline, or cleavage.
 - ii. Bottoms may expose parts of the leg, thigh, and hip.
 - iii. Undergarments cannot be worn as outerwear. They should be worn beneath a layer of outerwear, however straps and waistbands of outerwear may be exposed.
 - iv. Swimsuits can be worn during the appropriate athletic activity.
 - v. Headwear can be worn, provided it does not obscure the face (except as a religious observance)
- 1.1.3 Clothing and attire must comply with the minimum safety requirements for any intended education activity (physical education classes, science classes, technical education, etc.) as informed by the SGDSB and provincial organizations such as the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA), the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA), or the Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE).
- 1.1.4 Clothing, footwear, and/or accessories should respect the goals of SGDSB to promote environments which uphold equity, anti-oppression, inclusion, and the principles of the Human Rights Code. This dress code explicitly restricts any article which:
 - i. Promotes lewd, vulgar, offensive, or obscene images or language, including hate speech, profanity, or pornography.
 - ii. Promotes, or could be interpreted to include content which is discriminatory (e.g. racist, anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, anti-Semitic, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, etc.). Additionally, this policy restricts articles which could be reasonably construed as defamatory, harassing, threatening, or promoting bias, prejudice, or hate.
 - iii. Promotes or symbolizes the illicit use of alcohol, drugs or drug-related paraphernalia (including cannabis, tobacco, and vaping), criminal activity or otherwise illegal conduct, or violence.
 - iv. May interfere with the operational aspects of safe schools or infringe on the rights of others.
 - v. Any articles which conflict with established school standard uniforms (if applicable)

2 School Uniforms

- 2.1 Individual schools, after substantial consultation with students, staff, parents/guardians, school councils, and other community stakeholders, may seek to approve (or rescind) a uniform standard as part of the student dress code. Any uniform standard must conform to this policy and the principles herein.

- 2.2 Inquiries about approving a uniform standard shall be directed to the appropriate Superintendent of Education, who will provide guidance on consultation and implementation.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The school principal is responsible for the following:
- 3.1.1 Adopting this policy as their school dress code;
 - 3.1.2 Determining if student attire represents a violation or contravention of the dress code;
 - 3.1.3 Addressing concerns or requests related to dress code accommodations based on any protected grounds under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* or other relevant grounds (such as body type/size);
 - 3.1.4 Ensuring all team, club, or other uniforms are consistent with the standards established in this policy (including OPHEA guidelines); and
 - 3.1.5 Coordinating the consultation process for the implementation of a school uniform, where applicable.
- 3.2 School and system staff are responsible for the following:
- 3.2.1 Promoting, modelling, and educating the school community and students about the dress code standards;
 - 3.2.2 Communicating specific requirements or amendments for student dress standards where there may be health and safety risks related to activities or the use of equipment; and
 - 3.2.3 Reporting dress code contraventions in ways that are non-discriminatory.
- 3.3 The Superintendents of Education are responsible for providing support to all staff to meet their responsibilities under this policy. Additionally, the Superintendent will provide guidance on uniform standard consultations and process.

4 Student Expectations

- 4.1 Students are expected to dress in ways that adhere to this policy.
- 4.2 If a student is found to be in contravention of the dress code, they should be provided with the following options:
- 4.2.1 To change into their own alternative clothing, if already available at the school;
 - 4.2.2 To change into temporary school clothing, provided by the school, if available; or
 - 4.2.3 If necessary, students' parents/guardians may be called to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear.
- 4.3 Students who refuse any of these options and/or repeatedly are found to have contravened the student dress code may be subject to progressive discipline standards in accordance with *SGDSB Policy 535 – Progressive Discipline and School Safety*.
- 4.4 Students understand that a contravention of the dress code may prevent them from participating in educational events or opportunities due to health and safety risks.
- 4.5 Students will not be found to be in contravention of the dress code if the contravention is due to accommodation.

5 Concerns or Complaints

- 5.1 In line with SGDSB *Policy 207 – Lines of Communication Regarding Complaints*, concerns, inquiries, or requests for accommodations regarding the student dress code policy should first go to the teacher.
- 5.2 If concerns are not able to be resolved by the teacher, they can be escalated to the principal of the school.
- 5.3 Should concerns persist after speaking with the principal, concerns can be directed to either the Superintendent of Education or to the Human Rights and Equity Office.

6 Review

- 6.1 This policy shall be reviewed in accordance with SGDSB policy.

Reference

Legal

Education Act, R.R.O. 1990
Ontario Human Rights Code
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
PPM 128 – Provincial Code of Conduct

Board Policy/Procedure

207 – Lines of Communication Regarding Complaints
520 – Student Code of Conduct
535 – Progressive Discipline
536 – Equity and Inclusive Education
717 – Human Rights and Harassment