

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

Title: Student Dress

Effective Date: May 9, 2023

Responsibility: Superintendent of Safe Schools

1.0 Guiding Principles:

The Near North District School Board (NNBDS) is committed to creating inclusive environments that are safe and equitable. NNDSB recognizes that decisions regarding dress are made with respect to individual expression, gender, cultural, creed and socio-economic needs, and are important to the overall health and well-being of an individual. NNDSB also acknowledges previous dress codes detrimentally impacted students who are female-identifying, Indigenous, Black, racialized, gender diverse, transgender and non-binary, and/or financially insecure, students with disabilities, and/or those experiencing other forms of marginalization.

This Student Dress Administrative Guideline will use the principles of anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, equity, and inclusion to ensure that:

- All students should be able to dress for school without fear of unnecessary discipline, body shaming, bias, or discrimination.
- Individuals are responsible for managing their own personal biases, behaviours and or perspectives/opinions related to others' choices of clothing.
- All students are treated equitably regardless of their race, age, ability, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, socio-economic circumstances, or body type/size.
- Students have a right to wear clothing of their choice that expresses their self-identified gender.
- Students have a right to wear religious attire without fear of discipline or discrimination.

2.0 Shared Rights and Responsibilities:

Students:

- The primary responsibility for student dress rests with the students themselves and their parents/guardians.
- Students have the right to make decisions about their attire, and they can wear what makes them comfortable and allows them to express themselves (e.g. clothing, hairstyle, makeup, jewelry, etc.).
- Students have the responsibility to respect the rights of others, and to help support a safe and shared environment that is in compliance with the student dress policy.

Staff:

- Staff are responsible for ensuring that student dress does not interfere with student and staff health or safety requirements, and/or promote an offensive, hostile or intimidating environment.
- Staff are responsible for ensuring the balance of student safety, health and well-being, and fostering a positive environment while also affirming and respecting student rights.
- Staff need to be able to explain the dress policy and address policy infractions without using body shaming language.
- Staff will not use personal standards to alter the student dress policy.
- Staff will respond to all student dress infractions in a manner that treats the violation as minor on the continuum of school rule violations, is consistent and fair in its application, and that does not result in differential treatment.
- Staff will respond to all student dress infractions in a manner that no student is negatively affected by dress policy enforcement because of racial identity, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, creed, beliefs, cultural or religious identify, disability, household income, body size/type, or body maturity or any other groups covered under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC).
- Staff will remove any references to outdated dress codes/policy that may exist on school websites, staff or student handbooks and update them according to this Administrative Guideline.

3.0 Standards for Student Dress:

- Must be worn in such a way that clothing does not expose or make visible genitals, nipples or buttocks.
- Must be worn in such a way that undergarments (bras, underwear, nipple coverings, etc.) are not substituted as outer clothing.
- Must not include clothing or accessories that display, denote, suggest, or reference: images, logos or language that portray ethnic prejudice, racism, sexism, vulgarity, gang-related markings, obscenities, profanity, hate speech, alcohol, drugs or related paraphernalia, other illegal conduct or activities, and/or pornography.
- Must not compromise health and safety standards.

4.0 Additional Considerations:

- Courses that include attire as part of the curriculum (for example, public speaking and job readiness) may include assignment-specific dress. Schools need to be aware there may be diverse culturally specific attire that would also meet the requirements of such a course.
- Schools must maintain a safe learning environment in classes where protective or supportive clothing is required. For example, activity-specific shoe requirements are permitted (e.g. athletic shoes for Physical Education).