

School Uniform Dress Code/School Dress Code	
<b>Adopted:</b> April 14, 2009	<b>Last Reviewed/Revised:</b> January 16, 2024
<b>Next Scheduled Review:</b> 2026-2027	
<b>Associated Policies &amp; Procedures:</b> <a href="#">I-25 Purchasing</a> <a href="#">I-31 Apparel Purchases and Fair Labour Practices</a> <a href="#">II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools Code of Conduct – Suspensions and Expulsions</a> <a href="#">II-45 - Equity and Inclusive Education</a> <a href="#">VI-44 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools</a> <a href="#">V-18 Community Engagement and Public Consultation Policy</a> <a href="#">VI-54 Equity and Inclusive Education</a>	

## Purpose

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

## Application and Scope

This policy applies to all students under the jurisdiction of the HCDSB.

## References

[Education Act](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

[Ontario Regulation 298](#)

## Definitions

**Competitive Bid Process** - An open, fair and transparent process of issuing a public bid whereby Proponents put together their best proposal and compete for the provision of goods and/or services.

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

**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 vendors and may include guidelines as to when and how particular items can be worn.

## 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.
- HCDSB 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.
- In our elementary schools, the HCDSB endorses and encourages the adoption of a school uniform dress code, 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.
- For elementary school communities, the HCDSB affirms a role for parents/guardians to determine, through democratic vote conducted in accordance with this policy, whether to adopt and implement a school uniform dress code.
- In each elementary school community that votes not to adopt and implement a school uniform dress code, the HCDSB requires adopting a student dress code, consistent with the values, traditions, distinctiveness of Catholic schools, and the requirements of this policy.
- In each secondary school, the HCDSB requires the adoption and implementation of a school uniform dress code, consistent with the values, traditions, and distinctiveness of Catholic schools.
- HCDSB recognizes that in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the HCDSB's Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and Procedure, there may be certain religious communities or cultural groups in schools that require specific items of dress or accommodations with reference to the school uniform.
- In consultation with students and parents/guardians, schools will provide reasonable accommodations to students with reference to the uniform or required religious/cultural attire.
- All accommodation requests should be reviewed in the context of supporting the dignity of the person in keeping with core gospel values that honour each person's dignity.

- HCDSB recognizes there is a shared responsibility for meeting the expectations of the school uniform dress code or student dress code.
- The primary responsibility for consistently enforcing the school uniform dress code or student dress code is that of the principal and school staff. They are expected to support the consistent implementation of such uniform dress codes.
- HCDSB recognizes that circumstances may require schools to access assistance for individual families with the purchase of uniforms.
- HCDSB will ensure that approved uniform vendors provide clothing that meets the physical and sensory needs of students of all abilities.
- HCDSB recognizes the necessity of a school dress code for those times when students are not in uniform (i.e. civvies day or spirit days, 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
- This policy shall be in accordance with provisions of the Education Act, Ontario Regulation 298, the Ontario Human Rights Code, *Policy I-31 Apparel Purchases and Fair Labour Practices*, and the governing values of the HCDSB.

## Requirements

### **General:**

All elementary schools shall adopt either a school uniform dress code or a school dress code for students in keeping with the HCDSB's Mission Statement, governing values, and Catholic social teaching.

All secondary schools shall adopt a school uniform dress code.

Religious and cultural attire that should be reasonably accommodated in schools includes, but is not limited to: head covering items, religious symbols, and items of ceremonial dress.

Administrators may ask the student to wear religious attire in the same colour as the uniform; however, there may be religious colour requirements that cannot be modified. Cultural and or modesty requirements may also include head coverings, long sleeves, or loose garments. Durags or other head coverings may be required to support the care and maintenance of some Black/African textured hair.

The HCDSB seeks to foster an atmosphere of religious and cultural understanding to be proactive in addressing potential harassment and discrimination.

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 that have been marked indicating a “YES” vote.
3. Upon achieving the approval described above (50% plus one), all students registered in the elementary school shall adhere to the school uniform dress code. Any action taken to implement the requirements of this policy, including the application of support 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. In schools that have chosen not to implement a school uniform, school communities will be consulted to consider the adoption and implementation of a school uniform dress code. This consultation will take place every three (3) years and will determine if a vote will proceed. This consultation will include students, teachers and school staff, parents and guardians, and school councils.
8. The results of the consultation process outlined above will determine whether or not an elementary school community will conduct a uniform vote in accordance with this policy if they have not yet done so. Implementing a school uniform shall be decided with a simple majority (50% plus one).
9. Similarly, an elementary school that has previously chosen to adopt a school uniform shall follow the same consultation process, and based on the school community feedback, 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/guardians, staff and students to explore the implications of introducing a school uniform dress code. The committee must prepare an Action Plan to be distributed prior to a community information night.

The following components of the Action Plan will be consistently implemented throughout the HCDSB:

**Communication Plan:** includes methods of communicating the Action Plan and subsequent community information meetings, 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 Vendor:**

- Elementary schools must use the HCDSB's authorized uniform vendor, excluding bottoms, which may be purchased from the HCDSB's authorized uniform vendor, or another source of the parent's choosing. All bottoms, regardless of source, must be navy blue, and must match the school uniform dress code.
- The uniform provider will be selected through a competitive bid process that will include participation by HCDSB staff, as appointed by the Director of Education. Up to three (3) Trustees will also be invited to participate in the process. At least three (3) members of CPIC (Catholic Parent Involvement Committee) and three (3) members of SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) will be involved in establishing the criteria for the competitive bid process. A student focus group may be consulted.
- The resulting contract through the competitive bid process will be for a duration of three (3) years with the option to extend for two additional one-year terms, or for a full two years as agreed upon by HCDSB and the uniform provider.

The selection criteria to determine the authorized uniform vendors must include affordability, cost, accessibility and convenience, quality, support for equity and availability of subsidies/family assistance, and compliance with *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 add additional items of uniform apparel (shirts, sweaters, vests, hoodies, 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 are 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 due to the 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 annually 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: Civvies or Spirit Days.

**Community Information Meeting:**

- The principal shall ensure the distribution of the Action Plan to parents/guardians 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 (i.e. Kindergarten, 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. If 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 communication 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.
- Only for families in the virtual learning environment who wish to receive a ballot by email:
  - The Principal will provide a numbered uniform ballot by email;
  - The signed ballot must be scanned or photographed and returned to the Principal by email;
  - The Principal will acknowledge receipt of the ballot by return email to the parent;
  - A ballot signed solely by a student and received by email will be considered a void

ballot.

- No proxy voting.
- It is recommended that the voting process be completed by April 30<sup>th</sup> 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. Ballots will be stored at the school for at least 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 (the 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 its 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. Criteria to be used in developing the student dress codes includes:
  - safety conditions



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
  - discriminatory or hate-motivated references to any of the protected code grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g., nationality, race, gender, etc.)
- Parents/guardians 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 its dress code, through their committee. This review process shall include consultation with students, school staff, parents/guardians 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/guardians 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 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:**

1. A secondary school's uniform shall be in keeping with our Catholic teaching.
2. 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.
3. Only a school logo/name shall be permitted on school uniforms. Advertisements of any kind on school uniforms are prohibited.
4. 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*.



5. The HCDSB recognizes the necessity of a school dress code for those times when students are not in uniform (i.e. civvies or spirit 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 *Policy II-39 Progressive Discipline and Safety in Schools*.
6. On days when students are not in uniform (i.e. civvies or spirit day), Principals will ensure that a school dress code is communicated and applied to all students. Criteria to be used in developing the non-uniform day includes:
  - safety conditions

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

- sexual content
  - substance abuse
  - violence
  - profanity
  - discriminatory or hate-motivated references to any of the protected code grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code (e.g., nationality, race, gender, etc.)
7. A copy of the school's uniform dress code will be included annually in the school's School Agenda Book and on the school's website.

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Board

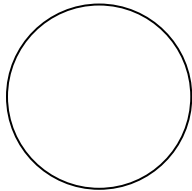
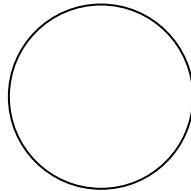
AUTHORIZED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of the Board



# SCHOOL UNIFORM BALLOT

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ballot # \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your choice below by marking one appropriate box with an "X"

In accordance with Policy II-41 School Uniform Dress Code/School Dress Code, I/we agree to the implementation of a uniform at [name of school] School.	
<b>YES</b> 	<b>NO</b> 

~~~~~

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print your name)

Child's(ren) Name and Grade:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please share your comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**It is suggested that every family respond for an accurate assessment of the school community's view on this important issue. Please return this form to your child's teacher.**

**\*\*Note: Approval to proceed with implementation requires that a majority (50% plus one) of those ballots returned have been signed indicating a "YES" vote.**

*(On School Letterhead)*  
**ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE**  
**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL UNIFORM DRESS CODE**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS** *(list full names and titles):*

Principal  
 Catholic School Council members  
 Students  
 Other *(identify)*

The following components of this Action Plan are supported by Operating Policy II-41 School Uniform Dress Code/School Dress Code (copy attached).

1. **COMMUNICATION PLAN:**

- a) Initial Discussion on proceeding to School Uniform Implementation: *(date)* \_\_\_\_\_.
- b) Discussion to proceed by Catholic School Council and Principal: *(date)* \_\_\_\_\_.
- c) Tentative timelines/methods of communication

| ITEM                                                                                          | DATE | METHOD | RESPONSIBILITY |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------|----------------|
| • Initial notification to the community of the Development of the Action Plan                 |      |        |                |
| • Detailed Action Plan sent to community                                                      |      |        |                |
| • Parent Information Night with the uniform supplier and Superintendent in attendance         |      |        |                |
| • Ballot to be sent out the night after the Parent Information Night/Notice of voting period  |      |        |                |
| • Results of Vote                                                                             |      |        |                |
| • To be determined upon approval as per HCDSB Policy (student fitting dates, locations, etc.) |      |        |                |

2. **THE UNIFORM SUPPLIER** approved by the Board is *(name of supplier)* \_\_\_\_\_.

3. **THE UNIFORM** (with school crests where appropriate):

- a) Components (list types of clothing)
- b) Colours
  - i. Navy Blue/White combinations
  - ii. Acceptable Additional School's Colour *(describe)* \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Prices – see attached list

4. **VOTING PROCESS**

- see Elementary Voting Procedures Ballot Questions page 3 of Operating Policy (attached)

5. **SAMPLE BALLOT** – (attached)