

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 352**

### **Safe Schools: Appropriate Dress Code**

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The intent of the Limestone District School Board Appropriate Dress Code Administrative Procedure is to reflect and support safe and respectful teaching and learning environments. The procedure establishes a minimum standard which must be adhered to in all Limestone schools and sites, and which is intended to apply to members of the school community including students, staff and volunteers. The procedure should be consistent with the *Human Rights Code* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (e.g., disability, religious beliefs).

#### **1.0.0 STANDARD APPROPRIATE DRESS CODE PROCEDURE**

1.1.0 Different forms of dress are appropriate in different situations. All members of the school community must dress in a manner that represents a respectful tone, reflects personal pride and regard for others.. Clothing that may be appropriate at home, at the beach, for example, may not be appropriate at school or school functions.

1.2.0 The Appropriate Dress Code Procedure will be the minimum standard required in all Limestone District School Board schools and sites.

1.3.0 The following elements shall be integral to all dress codes:

1.3.1 Members of the school community are required to:

- a) comply with the specific program, and health and safety policies in selected areas (e.g., gymnasias, laboratories, shops, kitchens);
- b) wear shoes (not slippers) at all times for hygienic and safety reasons;
- c) remove hats during the national anthem, at decorous events (e.g., Remembrance Day assemblies), and as requested by staff in offices and classrooms; and
- d) ensure the general torso/trunk (e.g. chest to thigh area) is appropriately covered.

1.3.2 Members of the school community must not display in any way or wear clothing or accessories that:

- a) have content which is deemed to be offensive to any individual or group, including but not limited to, material which is racist, sexist, homophobic or profane;
- b) promote unlawful activities or unwholesome life styles, including but not limited to, material which features alcohol, illicit drugs or disrespect;
- c) are unhealthy, unhygienic or unsafe, including but not limited to metal or other sharp adornments;

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d) are reflective of violent or anti-social culture, including but not limited to, gang related symbols or insignia.

1.3.3 Minor variations or exceptions to this code are appropriate under certain circumstances, such as dress-up or spirit days, co-instructional activities, or dances. Expectations on those occasions will be made clear by the school administration. Exceptions may also be granted on compassionate grounds (one such example might be classmates wearing hats when a fellow student has lost hair due to medical reasons).

1.3.4 Religious attire: Religious attire is a requirement of religious observation. It is not cultural dress. School staff and communities need to be sensitive to setting a climate of understanding and should accommodate appropriate religious attire.

1.3.5 In cases where a member of the school community is wearing clothing that contravenes 1.3.2, school administration or staff will sensitively and privately address the situation with the individual. Where possible, a staff member of the same gender will address the matter with the student. If the person contravening 1.3.2 is a student over the age of 18, or is 16 or 17 and withdrawn from parental control, the matter will be addressed only with the student. For students under the age of 18 who have not withdrawn from parental control, the dress code issue will be sensitively and privately addressed with the student and their parent/guardian.

#### **2.0.0 CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH SCHOOL DRESS CODES**

2.1.0 Dress code issues will be dealt with by school administration or other staff members in a sensitive, respectful and private manner. The normal expectation will be a requirement for the individual to immediately comply with the dress code, by changing into more appropriate clothing, or removing an inappropriate or unsafe accessory. Consequences will escalate if the individual refuses to comply or is repeatedly non-compliant.

#### **4.0.0 HUMAN RIGHTS CODE AND CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS**

4.1.0 Any codes must be consistent with the *Human Rights Code* and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. For example, allowances must be made for individuals whose head wear or other apparel is reflective of their faith.

#### **5.0.0 PROCESS TO EXTEND SCHOOL DRESS CODES**

5.1.0 If the school council wishes to add minor variations or refinements to its current school

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dress code (which must incorporate the elements of the district's Appropriate Dress Code, the council must inform the parents/guardians of the school of their proposal and invite feedback. The method to determine interest may also include surveys, discussion,

and/or focus groups. If the school council determines that it has strong support, it may incorporate the changes to its current dress code. If the school council does not have a strong mandate from its parent community, it should follow the process outlined below for schools wishing to extend the district's Appropriate Dress Code.

The school council would require the support of a majority of parents/guardians before an extension to the district's Appropriate Dress Code could be implemented. The process should include the following steps:

- 5.1.1 Information must be disseminated in advance to the parent population, through written notice followed by a parent information night. This information shall include:
  - a) comprehensive description of the existing and proposed dress codes;
  - b) data regarding the opinions of school council, students, staff, and administration; and
  - c) cost factors, including a proposed strategy to address issues of affordability should the proposed change to the school dress code require the purchase of clothing.
- 5.1.2 After the parents have time to consider the proposal carefully for at least two weeks, the school council shall take a vote asking for support for the proposed dress code.
- 5.1.3 The following criteria would need to be met in order for a proposed new dress code to be accepted for implementation:
  - a) households eligible to vote would include parents/guardians of students who will be registered in the school in the year of implementation;
  - b) students reaching the age of majority, by the first day of the school year that the dress code will be implemented, would vote for their own households, unless they are graduating;
  - c) a minimum participation rate of 67% of the eligible students' households;
  - d) a 75% majority of those who voted, in support of the proposed new dress code or amendments.
- 5.1.4 The school council, with the assistance of the principal, will distribute a ballot or ballot to each eligible household, stipulating the time the ballots will need to be returned.

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Households in which students will be graduating, and therefore will not be in the school when the dress code will be applied, are not eligible to receive a ballot or ballots.

- 5.1.5 Failure to meet the criteria described above shall result in the school maintaining its current dress code, so long as all elements of the district's Appropriate Dress Code were incorporated.

#### Legal References:

*Education Act S. 302(5) Appropriate Dress*

*Ontario Regulation 298 S. 11(19) 1.0.0 Principal to Consult School Council/Appropriate Dress*

Last reviewed: April 2018