

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Dress Code</b>		
<b>Date of Issue</b>	November 20, 2001	<b>Related Procedure</b>	
<b>Revision Dates</b>	March 29, 2005; May 19, 2009; February 21, 2012 (rev. Rationale-Strategic Plan); October 18, 2016; March 21, 2023	<b>Related Forms</b>	
<b>Review Date</b>	March 1, 2028	<b>Originator</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>References</b>			
BP 6820-D “Safe and Accepting Schools”; Regulation 612 - School Councils; BP 7520-D “Human Rights”; AP 6822-D “Code of Conduct”; AP 7521-D “Religious Accommodation”; Ontario Human Rights Code; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; AP 6825-D “Progressive Discipline – Students”			

**1.0 RATIONALE**

- 1.1 Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) policies will support and provide direction necessary to achieve the board’s Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan priorities.
- 1.2 Bluewater District School Board believes that expectations for appropriate dress should align with provincial, and federal legislation, along with board policies, to support safe and respectful learning and working environments that promote student achievement and well-being.

**2.0 POLICY**

- 2.1 Bluewater District School Board believes that:
  - i) students/staff should be treated equitably, regardless of their race, colour, creed, culture, ethnicity, linguistic origin, disability, socio-economic status, age, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, citizenship, immigration status, family status, marital status, body type/shape/size, or any another factor in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, BP 7520-D “Human Rights”, BP 6303-D “Equity and Inclusive Education, and AP 7521-D “Religious Accommodation”, where applicable;
  - ii) students/staff should be able to dress for school/work without fear of body shaming<sup>1</sup>, bias, or discrimination;
  - iii) individuals are responsible for managing their own personal biases and/or perspectives/opinions related to others’ choices of clothing; and
  - iv) a student dress code must be implemented with every student in mind, resulting in barrier-free access to the fullest extent possible. The standard design and application of the student dress code must be flexible enough to account for the diversity, accessibility, safety, and dignity of all students.

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<sup>1</sup> **Body-shaming** means the practice of humiliating, expressing mockery, or criticism about a person's body type, shape, or size

- 2.2 The BWDSB dress code is based on the above-noted beliefs, in addition to the system expectations noted in section 3.0.

### 3.0 SYSTEM EXPECTATIONS

#### 3.1 Student Dress Code

Students must wear clothing, accessories, and shoes that are suitable for the BWDSB environment<sup>2</sup> and that meet the following expectations.

##### 3.1.1 Dress will:

- i) comply with health and safety requirements for the intended activity, including appropriate footwear (e.g., physical education classes, swimming classes (see (ii)), science classes, sporting events, technical education, etc.);
- ii) Swimwear of any type may only be worn if required for the intended activity (see 3.1.1 (i)), and would not be appropriate as outerwear in any other circumstance;
- iii) respect the board's intent to sustain a community that is positive, anti-oppressive, equitable, accepting, and inclusive of a diverse range of social and cultural identities;
- iv) not promote content that can reasonably be interpreted to be discriminatory, defamatory, threatening, lewd, vulgar, obscene, promoting hate, profanity, pornography, or any other content that disrupts the learning environment;
- v) not refer to tobacco, cannabis, alcohol, drugs or related paraphernalia, promotion or incitement of violence or harassment, any illegal conduct, profanity, pornography, or criminal activities, or depict or display hate speech; and
- vi) not interfere with the safe operation of the school.

3.1.2 Clothing will be worn in such a way to cover the groin, nipples, and buttocks with material that is not see-through/transparent.

3.1.3 Clothing may expose shoulders, abdomen, neck lines, legs, thighs, and hips.

3.1.4 Underwear cannot be used as outerwear and should be worn beneath a layer of outerwear. Straps and waistbands may be exposed.

3.1.5 Headwear that is worn for the purpose of religious observance may obscure the face. All other headwear may be worn as long as it does not obscure the face.

#### 3.2 Staff Dress Code

3.2.1 It is the board's expectation that all staff will present themselves at work in an appropriate and professional manner. Employee dress should be guided by collective agreements, health and safety regulations, professional association codes of ethics, and professional job requirements.

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<sup>2</sup> The **BWDSB environment** is defined as board property, school buses, virtual learning and working environment, electronic media, school or work-authorized events or activities, in before- and after-school programs, including co-curricular activities and field trips, and may include any other circumstances that may have an impact on the school or work climate.

**3.3 Communication**

- 3.3.1 The dress code expectations noted in sections 3.1 and 3.2 will be clearly conveyed to students, parents/guardian, and staff, displayed in schools, posted on the school website, and highlighted in announcements, newsletters etc. for clear reminders. Reference to this board policy will also be included in all dress code messaging.

**3.4 Enforcement / Compliance**

- 3.4.1 To ensure effective and equitable enforcement, staff must be consistent and fair in the application of the student dress code and base decisions on objective, verifiable evidence of impact.
- 3.4.2 Staff will not use subjective discretion to vary the requirements in any ways that lead to discriminatory outcomes, differential treatment, or reinforce and/ or increase marginalization or oppression.
- 3.4.3 Student dress code violations that threaten health and safety, and/ or promote violence, illegal activity, bullying, harassment, and/ or are motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate against any individual or identifiable groups, are serious violations of board policy BP 6820-D “Safe and Accepting Schools” and must be responded to in accordance with BP 6820-D and associated procedures.
- 3.4.4 Staff will respond to all other student dress code violations in a manner that:
- i. treats the violation as minor on the continuum of school rule violations;
  - ii. ensures no student is negatively affected by dress code enforcement because of race, colour, creed, culture, ethnicity, linguistic origin, disability, socio-economic status, age, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, citizenship, immigration status, family status, marital status, body type/shape/size, or any another factor in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, BP 7520-D “Human Rights”, BP 6303-D “Equity and Inclusive Education, and AP 7521-D “Religious Accommodation”, where applicable;
  - iii. does not require the removal of students from a classroom or a loss of class time as a disciplinary consequence; and
  - iv. offers a continuum of choices to remedy any inappropriate dress, such as:
    - (a) asking the student to wear additional clothing of their own to obscure the inappropriate dress choice;
    - (b) allowing the student to seek out and borrow additional clothing from a peer;
    - (c) allowing the student to contact parent or guardian to bring extra clothes;
    - (d) allowing the student to wear clothing provided by the school.
- 3.4.5 Students who refuse to comply with choices provided to remedy inappropriate dress and/ or who repeatedly violate the student dress code may be subject to progressive discipline under BP 6820-D “Safe and Accepting Schools” and its related procedure AP 6825-D “Progressive Discipline – Students”.

**3.5 Concerns**

- 3.5.1 Students are encouraged to speak with appropriate staff (e.g., their teacher, school administrator) regarding any dress code concerns.
- 3.5.2 Parents/guardians will follow AP 1604-D “Communications – Addressing Parent/Community Concerns” to address any concerns related to dress code enforcement.