



# Student Dress Code Procedure

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## 1. Why has the Student dress code procedure been revised?

On 10 March 2018, the Minister for Education announced that the Department of Education would review the Student dress code procedure.

This commitment was made in response to feedback from the Queensland community.

## 2. What are the key changes that have been made to the Student dress code procedure?

Key changes:

- Schools are obliged to offer shorts and pants as uniform options for all students in all uniform categories. This is a new obligation for schools, with implementation expected in 2019.
- Two checklists have been added to support principals when developing and reviewing dress codes, and when resolving issues of non-compliance.
- Additional responsibilities have been added:
  - For principals (reflecting current practice)—to ensure student dress codes consider purpose, community diversity, health and safety, anti-discrimination legislation, individual needs, functionality and affordability.
  - For P&Cs—to support the school to resolve student dress code issues and direct parents to the principal to discuss individual concerns.
  - For parents—to commit to and support student compliance with the student dress code.

## 3. Who did the department consult with during its review of the Student dress code procedure?

The Queensland Teachers' Union, Girls' Uniform Agenda, P&Cs Qld, the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, and principals' associations were consulted as part of the review.

## 4. How many schools currently offer shorts and pants for girls?

Approximately 60 percent of state schools report already offering shorts and pants options for girls, and others have unisex shorts and pants.

## 5. Do the requirements apply to all schools, including non-state schools?

The Student dress code procedure applies to all Queensland state schools.

Non-state schools make their own decisions about dress codes.

## 6. When do the new requirements take effect?

It is expected that the dress code of all state schools will reflect the updated procedure in 2019.

## 7. Why do girls need shorts and pants as part of their school uniform?

Giving girls the option to wear shorts and pants reflects our modern world.

Shorts and pants options for all students provide opportunities for everyone to participate in the full range of activities, including sports, play and riding a bike to and from school.

It provides greater flexibility and choice for all students to wear clothes that they feel comfortable in.

## 8. Are unisex shorts and pants required or can the school offer different styles for girls and boys?

As per the procedure, "Shorts and pants options in designs suitable to a student's gender identity must be included for all students in all uniform categories". School communities should decide on which shorts and pants styles best suit their students' needs. In some cases, a couple of styles may be offered, while in other cases, e.g. sports shorts, a unisex option may be suitable.

## 9. Our uniform supplier does not have girls' shorts and pants options. What do we do?

Many schools across Queensland, and Australia, have offered options for girls' shorts and pants for some time. Suppliers are moving with the times. Talk with your supplier about your needs. If one supplier cannot meet your school's needs, talk with other suppliers.

## 10. Can schools still offer skirts and dresses as part of their dress code?

Yes. Shorts and pants are an additional option that should be added to the dress code, if they are not already included.

### **11. What are the financial implications for schools/families?**

If schools already offer shorts and pants for girls, there will be no additional financial implications.

Principals must consider the affordability of uniforms and the socio-economic circumstances of families when developing or reviewing their school's dress code.

If parents choose to take advantage of the option for their daughter to wear shorts or pants to school, schools will be working with uniform suppliers to find affordable options that suit the school community.

Schools will continue to offer payment plans, modifications or exemptions and/or second-hand uniforms at reduced cost.

### **12. Who will schools need to consult with when updating uniform requirements?**

The procedure continues to require state school principals to consult with students, school staff, parents and the P&C Association when developing and reviewing the school's dress code.

Two new checklists are available to support schools with developing and reviewing a dress code, and responding to non-compliance.

### **13. Is there enough time for schools to make the required changes in 2019?**

The majority of schools will not need to change their current student dress code significantly to meet the new requirements.

Schools are encouraged to start reviewing their current dress code now, in consultation with their school communities, and determine if additional uniform options are required for 2019.

If there are issues with the availability of new uniform items, schools will work through these with the assistance of suppliers.

### **14. How do I find out about a school's dress code?**

A school's dress code is to be published on the school's website.

Schools should communicate their dress code to parents and students prior to enrolment at the school.

Parents agree to the dress code as part of the enrolment process through the enrolment agreement.

### **15. What if a student or parent disagrees with their school's dress code?**

Any parents or students who have concerns about the dress code at their school should discuss their concerns with the principal and P&C.

### **16. What monitoring will be put in place to make sure state schools implement the new requirements?**

Principals have a legislative and professional obligation to meet the requirements set out in all departmental procedures, and as school leaders, they are trusted to do so.

Principals and P&Cs have been advised of the revised procedure and its requirements through a wide range of communication channels, including social media.

P&C Associations and parents play an important role in ensuring that schools respond to the needs and expectations of the school community.

### **17. Can a school require students to be 'clean shaven' as part of their student dress code?**

Yes. Aspects of personal presentation, such as grooming, may form part of a school's dress code. This decision is made at a local level in consultation with the school community.

### **18. If a student does not comply with a requirement to be clean shaven, what would be an appropriate response by the school?**

In such cases, schools should:

- talk to the student, and parent/carer if necessary, to determine why the student is not clean shaven e.g. for reasons relating to their culture, religion, health or financial circumstances
- negotiate short or long term exemptions if necessary
- where no acceptable reason is identified, schools can implement appropriate consequences such as detention and/or contact with the parent/carer seeking their support to help their child meet the personal presentation standards.

Schools cannot suspend or exclude a student for not complying with the dress code; nor should schools require students to shave at school.