Procedure

Student dress code procedure

Version: 7.0 | **Version effective**: 24/01/2022

Audience

All state schools

Purpose

This procedure outlines processes principals need to follow in developing, approving, documenting, implementing and reviewing student dress codes in Queensland state schools.

Overview

In accordance with section 360 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld), a principal may develop a student dress code that will apply when students are attending, or representing, the school.

A dress code provides guidance to the school community on the agreed uniform and standards for student personal presentation. The purpose of a dress code is to promote a sense of identity and pride; help strengthen school community cohesion; enhance student safety, health and wellbeing; and prepare students for the expectations of some workplaces.

When developing a dress code, the principal must ensure it is compliant with relevant legislation and guidelines, as described in this procedure.

Dress codes must:

- be developed in consultation with the school community
- be consistent with health and safety considerations
- comply with human rights, anti-discrimination and disability standards for education legislation
- consider affordability, functionality and durability of uniform items
- provide uniform options, including shorts and pants, in all uniform categories for all students, regardless of gender
- include processes to enable modifications, reasonable adjustments or exemptions for individual students or groups of students
- be published on the school's website.

Dress codes clearly explain and document standards of acceptable dress in relation to clothing worn by students, including headwear, footwear, and other aspects of personal presentation.

Dress codes must incorporate strategies to accommodate the individual needs and circumstances of students and strategies for managing non-complying students.

Responsibilities

Principals

- consult with students, school staff, parents and the Parents and Citizens' (P&C) Association when developing and reviewing the school's dress code
- approve the dress code and/or amendments to the dress code.
- ensure the dress code:
  - states its purpose and acceptable standards of dress and student personal presentation
  - complies with relevant legislation and departmental policies
  - is inclusive of students from diverse backgrounds and circumstances
  - is inclusive of students with disability (including students with specific sensory, physical or other needs)
  - outlines the rights and responsibilities of parents, students and the school
  - is flexible and allows the right of choice (including choice of shorts and pants) for all students by clothing type regardless of gender
  - is practical and provides all students with equal access to the full range of school activities
  - is responsive to individual abilities and needs
  - includes criteria and processes for granting and managing modifications, reasonable adjustments or exemptions
  - considers affordability of uniform items and includes strategies to reduce costs and/or support families in financial need
  - includes strategies to positively reinforce compliance
  - includes strategies to manage non-compliance that are not contrary to student wellbeing or academic outcomes
  - includes strategies for resolution of dress code non-compliance or other issues.
- comply with the Purchasing and procurement procedure when engaging a school uniform supplier.
- ensure the school possesses the intellectual property rights for the school logo.
- licence the school logo to manufacturers to reproduce the school logo for the purpose of manufacturing school uniforms, and maintain all licences on record.
- communicate dress code requirements to the school community, ensuring it is published on the school's website and readily available on request.
- ensure the dress code is communicated clearly and through multiple channels to students and parents prior to enrolment, as part of the enrolment agreement, providing a basis for parent agreement.

- enforce the dress code fairly and equitably.
- determine, document and inform parents and students of reasons for dress code exemption decisions.
- monitor issues and review the dress code periodically.
- act and make decisions in a way that respects and protects human rights (DoE employees only), protects students from unfair discrimination, harassment and other objectionable conduct, and ensures that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability.

Parents and Citizens' Associations (P&Cs)

- support and engage in consultation led by the principal, giving advice and recommendations regarding the school's dress code.
- consider:
  - human rights, anti-discrimination and disability standards for education
  - health and safety
  - affordability, functionality and durability of uniform items.
- direct parents to the principal to discuss any individual issues regarding the dress code.
- support the school to resolve issues regarding the school's dress code.

Parents

- commit to supporting the dress code as part of the enrolment agreement.
- support the student to adhere to the dress code.
- request short- or long-term modifications, reasonable adjustments or exemptions to the dress code in writing or a mode accessible to parents (e.g. face-to-face meeting with the support of an interpreter or translator), providing reasons for the request.
- work with the school to resolve issues regarding student compliance with the school's dress code.
- engage in consultation processes about the dress code.

Process

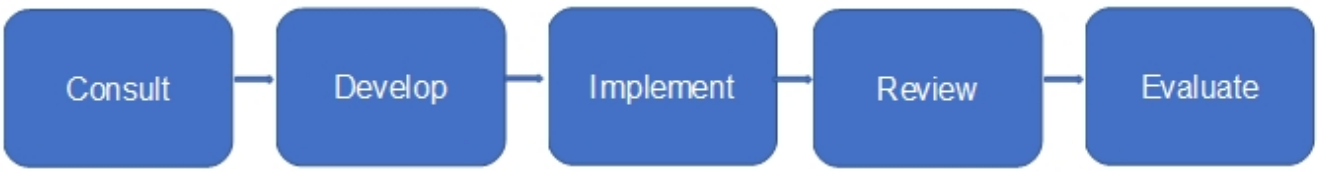

Image 1 – Process for student dress code

Principals

Consultation

1. Consult with stakeholders (students, staff, parents, P&C) and interest groups (e.g. cultural leaders) early in the process of developing and reviewing the dress code to ensure the needs and diversity of the school community are represented.
2. Seek feedback about existing and proposed dress standards and strategies to promote the wearing of the school uniform using multiple channels of communication.
3. Consult with suppliers to obtain information about uniform options that are affordable and readily available.
4. Document all consultation undertaken.
5. Ensure timely communication of any proposed changes to the school uniform (before the changes are implemented), to allow parents, school uniform shops, suppliers, external retailers, and any other parties with significant stocks of uniforms to prepare for the changes.
6. Display uniform options for feedback.

Developing a dress code

1. Develop dress code standards that comply with workplace health and safety legislation and consider the safety of students and others, using the Checklist – Developing, reviewing and implementing a student dress code as appropriate. Consider:
   - uniform items and personal presentation (e.g. piercings, jewellery) appropriate to specific curriculum activities (e.g. protective footwear in laboratory or workshop lessons) as required by the Managing risks in school curriculum activities procedure and the appropriate Curriculum activity risk assessment (CARA) – Activity guidelines
   - sun safety guidelines (e.g. hats and swim shirts as required by the Sun safety strategy).
2. Develop dress code standards that comply with the human rights, anti-discrimination and disability standards for education legislation ensuring that dress codes do not give rise to unlawful discrimination or non-inclusive practices against students. Designs suitable to a student's gender identity, sensory, physical or other needs, must be included for all students in all uniform categories. Consider:
   - other options and modifications to the dress code that are inclusive, reflecting the diverse needs of students and supporting student health and wellbeing.
   - Examples: A dress code may permit head coverings such as the hijab, yarmulke or turban in school colours for reasons of religion, ethnicity or cultural practices, traditions or customs. Or a dress code may permit the reasonable adjustment of an item of clothing for sensory, physical, or other needs of a student with disability.
3. Develop strategies for families who may be experiencing financial hardship to comply with the dress code. Consider:
   - staged introduction of new dress code options
   - cost reduction strategies (e.g. bulk purchasing, clothing pools, providing items for loan, second-hand clothing services, uniform exchange services, inclusion of non-logo bearing alternatives)
   - financial support, payment plans or extended periods of time to purchase uniform items

- proactively informing families of support available.

4. Develop dress code standards that provide all students with equal access to the full range of school activities. Consider functionality of clothing items:
   - durability of materials
   - comfort and suitability for climatic conditions
   - designs that support participation in incidental physical activity (e.g. riding to school; sport or exercise during breaks, before and after school).
5. Develop processes to grant short- or long-term modifications to, reasonable adjustments or exemptions from, the dress code, on a case-by-case basis. Consider:
   - criteria for granting of variations (e.g. health condition, pregnancy, disability, gender diversity, religious requirements, ethnic or cultural background, financial hardship)
   - how students or parents seek modifications or exemptions to the dress code using multiple communication channels e.g. email, text, face-to-face meeting, with the support of interpreter or translator
   - processes to document modification/reasonable adjustment/exemption decisions (e.g. letter to parent, exemption card for student to carry). A confidential centralised record of requested modifications, reasonable adjustments/exemptions should be established. Where patterns of modifications, reasonable adjustments and exemptions are identified over time, they should be considered in subsequent reviews of school uniform requirements
   - establish positive consequences and strategies to promote compliance with the dress code.
6. Develop processes to manage student non-compliance with the dress code, including logical and appropriate consequences that align with the school's Student Code of Conduct. For example:
   - support the student to comply with the dress code using loan items or removal of inappropriate items (e.g. jewellery, nail polish)
   - talk with the student and/or their parent (as necessary) about their non-compliance with the dress code and any consequences
   - provide alternative educational activities if student participation in essential curriculum activities is prevented for safety reasons
   - detention for persistent non-compliance
   - prevention from attending or participating in any non-essential curriculum activity in which the student would have been representing the school.
7. Ensure that students are not:
   - suspended, excluded or at risk of having their enrolment cancelled for not complying with the dress code
   - given a consequence that damages their academic or external career prospects
   - disadvantaged, discriminated against, or subject to non-inclusive practices where required dress code items are not available because of circumstances beyond the control of the student and/or the student's parent.
8. Ensure the dress code clearly outlines the rights and responsibilities of students, parents and the school.

9. Publish the dress code through multiple communication channels and make it freely available on request.

Student uniform supply arrangements

1. Refer to the current procurement supply arrangement (DoE employees only) and the Panel of pre-Qualified Providers for the provision of school uniforms which conform with Australian Standards or equivalent.
2. Use the appropriate Deed of Licence, as outlined in the Information sheet – Copyright school uniform logo, when licensing a manufacturer to reproduce the school logo for the purpose of manufacturing uniforms or to restrict the retailers to whom the licensed manufacturers can supply the uniforms.
3. Ensure parents and retailers are notified of any proposed change to school uniforms as soon as possible, so that school uniform shops and others with significant stock of uniforms can replace or prepare for the changes.

Implementing the dress code

1. Implement strategies and processes as outlined in the dress code.
2. Where there are individual issues with the dress code, or a persistent failure of a student to comply with the code, efforts should be made to resolve issues at the school level. Refer to the Guide – Resolving student dress code issues as appropriate.
    - explore/identify the reasons why the student is not complying and determine whether additional support is required, or whether a modification, reasonable adjustment or exemption is warranted.
    - inform and support the student's parent to develop strategies to assist the student to comply with dress code requirements.
3. If students or parents are dissatisfied with how the school has resolved the issue, refer to the Customer complaints management procedure.

Reviewing and evaluating the dress code

1. Monitor modifications, reasonable adjustments, exemptions and issues raised regarding the dress code.
2. Periodically review the dress code in consultation with stakeholders (students, staff, parents, P&C) and interest groups (e.g. cultural leaders) using the Checklist – Developing, reviewing and implementing a student dress code as appropriate.
3. Allow a suitable transition period and arrangements for the introduction of new uniform items or other dress code requirements.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Dress code	A standard specifying what is acceptable in relation to items of clothing, footwear and jewellery worn by the students and the personal presentation of the students that applies when students are attending or representing the school.
Parent	See section 10 Meaning of parent under *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)*

Term	Definition
Reasonable adjustments	A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it achieves this purpose while considering the student's needs and balancing the interest of all parties affected including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, the staff and other students. The need for an adjustment and the nature of an adjustment should be determined in consultation with the student or their associate.
Uniform categories	Categories of uniforms determined by a school to be appropriate for different occasions or activities (e.g. formal, every day, winter, sports, extra-curricular activities).

Legislation

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) Chapter 2, Part 1-3, Part 4 Division 3-4, Part 4 Division 10, Part 5
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwlth) Part 1, Part 2 Division 2, Part 2 Division 5
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld) Chapter 12, Part 9 ss.360-363
- *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) Part 2
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cwlth) Part II s.9
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cwlth) Part I, Part II Division 2, Part II Division 4
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld)

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Policies and procedures in this group

- Nil

Supporting information for this procedure

- Checklist – Developing, reviewing and implementing a student dress code
- Frequently asked questions about the Student dress code procedure
- Guide – Considerations for resolving student dress code issues
- Information sheet – Copyright school uniform logo
- School logo licence

Other resources

- Customer complaints management procedure
- Developing a sun safety strategy
- Disability Standards for Education: NCCD Portal
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Factsheet 2)
- Diversity in Queensland schools – Information for principals
- Enrolment agreement
- Human Rights – OnePortal (DoE employees only)
- Inclusion – OnePortal (DoE employees only)
- Inclusive education
- Inclusive education policy
- Managing risks in school curriculum activities procedure
- Purchasing and procurement procedure
- Purchasing and procurement services (DoE employees only)
- Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act: an easy read guide
- Queensland Human Rights Commission – Responsibilities for schools and universities
- Student discipline procedure
- Students with disability – OnePortal (DoE employees only)

Contact

For further information, please contact your closest regional office.

Review date

24/01/2025

Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

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