

# Uniform & Dress Code Policy

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## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact 03 9704 6313 or [hillsmeade.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:hillsmeade.ps@education.vic.gov.au).

## RATIONALE

- School Councils are responsible for:
  - developing and reviewing their dress codes in close consultation with their school community to ensure:
  - the code reflects the values of the school community
  - there is a balance between the rights of individual students and the best interests of the whole school community
  - deciding annually if amendments or a full review of the dress code are required
- The dress code purposes should be clearly identified. These purposes may include promoting:
  - a sense of identity and pride
  - cohesion and good order in the school
  - allowing all children to feel equal
  - preventing bullying and competition on the basis of clothing
  - ensuring children's appearance reflects the expectations of their school community
  - enhancing the profile and identity of the school and its children within the wider community
  - strengthening the spirit of community within the school
  - enhancing individual children's safety and group security
  - ensuring all children are dressed safely and appropriately for school activities
  - encouraging children to develop pride in their appearance
  - encouraging children to present themselves appropriately for a particular role
- Schools work with their school communities in developing, reviewing, implementing and enforcing dress codes.
- All dress codes must comply with human rights and anti-discrimination legislation by:
  - treating students equally
  - not treating students differently because of personal characteristics
  - upholding human rights requirements
- Schools also work with the State Schools' Relief to support children in need as well as supporting their fundraising activities.
- School Councils should document their dress code consultation and development process as evidence that they have consulted with their school community. The School Council's dress code policies may be required as evidence or used by bodies such as Ombudsman Victoria in resolving disputes.
- Schools must:
  - communicate their dress code to the school community

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- assist families having difficulties with uniform costs
- ensure that measures used to enforce the dress code are consistent with the Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance and the school's Student Engagement policy see: Department resources on the website below
- The School Council must be able to demonstrate to its school community that it has considered the cost implications of its selected school uniform and taken into account the ability of its parent/carer population to afford it.
- Schools may choose to include appropriate measures to enforce their dress code in their student engagement policy. The Student Engagement Guidelines support schools to create a positive school culture, clearly articulating school-wide expectations and consistent processes to address areas of concern in a staged manner.

## PURPOSE

- To ensure Hillsmeade Primary School complies with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, Section 16(1)(c) - Education and Training Regulations 2007 and Section 40 - Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995.
- To ensure the school develops, implements, reviews and enforces its dress code appropriately.
- To promote equality amongst all children.
- To further develop a sense of pride in, and identification with the school.
- To provide durable clothing that is cost effective and practical for our school environment.
- To maintain and enhance the positive image of the school in the community.

## DEFINITION

A dress code is a written statement of School Council expectations regarding the appearance of children during school hours, while travelling to and from school and when engaged in school activities out of school hours.

It may:

- define standards for the general presentation of students
- set out broad guidelines about student appearance
- require students to wear a school uniform
- define specifications for garment design and colour

## IMPLEMENTATION

- The School Council will carefully consider the forms of consultation that will be undertaken in developing or reviewing a dress code. For example consultation could include:
  - letters to parents and carers

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- surveys
- information in newsletters
- public meetings
- student meetings
- focus groups
- information on the school website
- The student dress code, including any changes in dress requirements will be:
  - communicated widely throughout the school community
  - provided to all prospective children and parents and carers prior to enrolment at the school
  - translated into community languages, if required
  - communicated via a translator, if required, for example at an information night.

Important: The school will ensure that children and parents and carers are aware that they can apply to the Principal for an exemption to the dress code.

- The uniform takes into account among other factors the cost, quality of items, reliability of supply/supplier, re-use or recycling of items.
- The uniform will be reviewed annually to ensure the code reflects the values of the community and that there is a balance between rights of individual students and the whole school community.
- As the dress code takes precedence over a child's individual preferences the School Council will consider if the dress code:
  - is compatible with state and federal human rights and anti-discrimination legislation (see: Human Rights and Anti-discrimination Requirements within Related policies).
  - ensures that any gender specific requirements accord with school community standards and anti-discrimination legislation
  - clearly outlines the rights and responsibilities of parents/carers, children and the school
  - is respectful of the cultural norms of the school community
  - is reasonable by contemporary standards and avoids unnecessarily intruding on children's rights in matters of personal appearance
  - allows for individual expression through alternatives within overall garment requirements
  - is suitable to the role of children and the tasks and functions they perform
  - takes into account health and safety issues
  - allows children to dress comfortably in all weather conditions
  - provides clothing for sports or physical education that is practical and that all children will feel comfortable wearing
  - supports informal or incidental physical activity such as lunchtime sport, walking or cycling to school
  - is communicated clearly to children, parents/carers prior to enrolment, providing a basis of assent
  - requirements can be met by all children and parents/carers - the range and cost of garments should reflect the capacity of families to provide them
  - is supported by strategies to assist families who may have difficulty meeting uniform costs and this information is communicated to the school community

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- outlines the dress code complaints/concerns process
  - outlines the consultation and decision-making processes for reviews and amendments
  - will be reviewed if circumstances change significantly
- The Council acknowledges that some children may wish to observe a particular religious or cultural requirement whilst also complying with the dress code.
  - Parents/carers seeking exemptions to the dress code due to religious beliefs, ethnic or cultural background, student disability or health condition must approach the Principal for exemption.
  - If the exemption is not granted, reasons will be provided in writing.
  - The Principal will keep a written record of all the decisions made and the reasons provided, in case a decision is questioned.
  - The school will communicate its dress code to new families on enrolment.
  - The uniform is available from PSW's store in Officer 407 Princess Hwy, Officer VIC 3809
  - The school will investigate options for supporting families who may have difficulty meeting the cost of uniform items. The school will include information about support options or strategies in their dress code and ensure this information is communicated to the school community.
  - Families having difficulties with uniform costs will be assisted. Parents/carers should approach the nominated Contact Person as per the Parent Payments Policy.
  - Arrangements can be made to supply uniforms via State Schools Relief for families experiencing economic hardship. State Schools Relief is a vastly over-stretched resource and any access of this service must be approved by the Principal. In order to utilise the online application portal, the school will first register on 8769-8400.
  - Generally children WILL NOT be excluded from activities or sent home for breaches of the dress code. However, when all other measures have had no success, a child may be excluded from excursions or interschool sport. Issues of safety may also lead to exclusion.
  - In extreme circumstances, children may be excluded from school (suspension/suspension) but only in accordance with the obligations outlined under Ministerial Order 625, see: Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance - Disciplinary Measures
  - Parents/carers can raise specific complaints about the dress code and/or suggest desired dress code changes to the School Council for consideration in the next review of the code.
  - The Uniform/Dress Code applies during school hours, while travelling to and from school, and when students are on school excursions.
  - Please refer also to the Sun & UV Protection [SunSmart] Policy, the Anti-Discrimination Policy, the Head Lice Management Policy, Parent Payments Policy, Support for Families Experiencing Hardship Policy and the Complaints, Parents Policy.

## EVALUATION

- This policy will be reviewed annually or if guidelines change (latest DET update late January 2018).

This update was ratified by School Council in March 2022.

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## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

On the Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [PAL Finance Manual – Financial Management in Schools](#)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	March 2023