

Procedure

School dress code

Please note this procedure is mandatory and staff are required to adhere to the content.

Procedure overview

This procedure outlines the administrative instructions for schools and school councils when developing, implementing or reviewing a student dress code in South Australia government schools.

After consultation with parents and students the school council may determine a dress code for the school (including a school-based preschool), in accordance to the instructions outlined in these procedures and pursuant to regulation 86 of the [Education Regulations 2012](#).

Scope

This procedure applies to all schools and school councils in the Department for Education (the department).

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1. Procedure detail

1.1 Legislation

Pursuant to regulation 86 of the [Education Regulations 2012](#) the school council of a school may—

- (a) in accordance with any administrative instructions issued by the Minister as described above and
- (b) after consulting with parents and students of the school in accordance with any administrative instructions issued by the Minister as described above and having regard to their views

determine a dress code for the school.

The Minister has delegated the power to issue administrative instructions pursuant to regulation 86 in relation to dress codes to the chief executive of the department.

1.2 School dress code

A school dress code is the documented standards of what is acceptable in relation to the clothing worn by students at the school.

A school dress code can be applied to all students of the school or a specific section of the student body, and can include a range of clothing for students, which can be in the form of a school uniform, colour code or mix and match clothing.

School councils are not required to determine a dress code, although dress codes are encouraged, as they play an important role in promoting a positive image of the school and creating a sense of identity among students and the community.

1.3 Development consideration

When developing a school dress code a school and school council must:

- consider the health and safety of students when engaged in a wide range of physical activities and weather conditions eg safe footwear, eye protection and hats
- reflect the school community standards and expectations
- be aware of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation, to ensure the code is inclusive of, but not limited to, considerations based on gender, disability, religion and culture
- be aware of current department policies and procedures intended to improve the learning environment and outcomes of students so that schools are supportive, positive, non-discriminatory, equitable and safe.

1.4 Consultation

A school council must ensure that all student and parent groups in their community are consulted when determining or reviewing a school dress code. This consultation process should be documented and must be open for a minimum of 3 months.

The school's dress code and any uniform requirements should be formally endorsed by the school council before implementation.

1.5 Design requirements

The design and concept of any school uniform requirements is a local determination to be made by the school head teacher and the school council.

1.5.1. Student population

All decisions should take into account the diverse nature of the student population in the school and not disadvantage any student.

The economic, personal, social and cultural factors affecting students and their families must be considered when deciding on items of uniform.

1.5.2. Costs of dress code

In making decisions about dress code, school councils must have regard to the cost of compliance and should include financial strategies to keep such costs as low as is practical for families.

Some students may have some misgivings having to apply for exemption or get second hand clothing. The school must be aware of and sensitive to these students, how their cultural values, backgrounds and economic circumstances may make it difficult for some to observe the school's dress code.

Any arrangements for the supply of uniforms with individual companies must comply with the [procurement governance policy](#).

1.6 Communication to parents

Pursuant to regulation 86(4) the head teacher must, on the adoption by the school of a dress code, inform the parents of each student of the school and, on the later enrolment of a student at the school, inform the parents of that student, in writing:

- of the dress code of the school, and
- of the parents' right to request the exemption of the student from that dress code.

1.7 Exemption

Pursuant to regulation 86(5) the head teacher may exempt a student from the school dress code upon receipt of a written request from a parent of each student. Grounds on which parents may seek exemption include:

- religious (clothing or adornments, unless the item poses an unacceptable risk to safety)
- cultural or ethnic
- new students (time to purchase, wear previous uniform)
- itinerant and mobile students
- financial hardship
- genuine medical or family sickness reasons and
- other additional grounds as the school council/head teacher may determine.

To minimise the possibility of conflict, the head teacher must ensure sensitive and careful consideration when approving an exemption. Adult students may seek exemption on their own behalf.

1.8 Implementation

The implementation, upon determination (initial or review), of a dress code should only occur after a formal notification period of 6 months, and preferably a period closer to 12 months.

Schools will usually expect students to wear the school's dress code during school hours, while travelling to and from school, and when engaged in school activities out of school hours.

1.9 Enforcement and non-compliance

The head teacher will enforce the dress code of the school and may take appropriate disciplinary action in relation to wilful and persistent breach of that dress code.

Pursuant to regulation 86(6) the head teacher may not enforce the dress code by the suspension, exclusion or expulsion of a student from the school, or by otherwise precluding the student from participating in the educational program of the school.

Positive reinforcement and encouraging responsible behaviour are the preferred approaches to ensure students comply with the school's dress code.

The whole school community has a role to play in encouraging the meeting of these standards.

Responses to students who do not wear the uniform must be appropriate. They should be clarified, agreed by the school community, documented and communicated to all parents and adult students. The response should be fair and consistent.

If desired, schools can provide spare clothing for students to change into (excluding those exempted from the dress code).

1.10 Review

A school council has the discretion to establish a formal review process for their school dress code, which will allow student and parent groups within their school community a process to seek review when circumstances change significantly or issues arise. For example receipt of a written request to the head teacher.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/responsibility for
School or governing council	Responsible for the determination of a school dress code that complies with the requirements outlined in this procedure.
Head teacher / principal	<p>The head teacher of a school must enforce the dress code, excluding in relation to those students who are exempt, and may take appropriate disciplinary action in relation to wilful and persistent breach of that dress code.</p> <p>The head teacher is required to determine the school's enforcement procedures and exemption conditions.</p> <p>Ensure that the school dress code determined by school council complies with the requirements of this procedure.</p>

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Additional grounds for exemption	The school council may include additional grounds for exemption, such as special consideration where the wellbeing of the student may be negatively affected.
Administrative instruction	Includes policy, procedures and guidelines.
Design and concept	Includes uniforms requirements such as the fabric of school uniforms, practicability and the marketing of uniforms.
Disciplinary action	Appropriate strategies to handle students for willful and persistent breaches of the uniform code include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">privately speak to the student to encourage him/her to observe the dress codeprovide advice to the parents via a diary note, phone call from the principal or letter to parentsverbal warning to studentnegotiation with student and parentsestablish exclusion zones for non-uniform wearers eg no hat, no play outside or play in the shadeextra dutiesdetentioninclude the student in decision making processes, for example, the dress code review process.
Gender	Regardless of a student's gender, the dress code should be flexible, and allow the right of choice. This includes the choice of clothing that allows for freedom of movement, level of comfort, safety, consideration of climatic factors, and specific circumstances such as pregnancy.
Head teacher	The person for the time being designated by the director-general as the head teacher of the school.
Financial strategies	Appropriate strategies to reduce the financial cost for families include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">second hand clothing serviceuniform exchange servicebulk buying/ordering of clothing by the schoolfinancial assistance in the form of loans, time payment or subsidyloan of dress code clothing for those in financial need.
Formal notification	A written or printed notice or announcement.
Parents	As ascribed by the <i>Education Act 1972</i> and, in relation to a school, means the parents of students attending the school.
Religious and culture	The school must be aware of and sensitive to students' cultural and religious values, and how their background may make it

difficult to observe the school's dress code.

School	A Government school or special school established under the <i>Education Act 1972</i> including students who are provided pre-school education at a Government school.
School council	A school council established under Part 8 of the <i>Education Act 1972</i> .
Student and parent groups	Groups to consult when developing the school dress code, for example, Aboriginal students, students with non-English speaking backgrounds, students at risk, low economic status students, adult students. Ensuring that there is equal gender representation.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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Related legislation

- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Education Regulations \(SA\) 2012](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)
- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2012 \(SA\)](#)

Related policy documents

- SA Equal Opportunity Commission – Equal Opportunity and You (religious appearance or dress) Children and students with disability policy
- Anti-racism intranet
- Attendance policy
- Gender diverse and intersex children and young people support procedure
- Supporting gender diverse, intersex and sexually diverse children and young people policy

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REVISION RECORD

Version	Approved by	Approved date	Review date	Amendments
-		2012		Formerly contained in the administrative instructions and guidelines (AIG)
1.0		07/05/2012		Administrative instructions moved to a stand-alone policy renamed the school dress code policy
1.1		10/01/2013		school dress code policy reviewed, minor edits and template changes
1.2	Executive director, partnerships, schools and preschools	31/08/2016	23/11/2019	School dress code policy moved to a Procedure. School dress code procedures reviewed, minor edits and template changes.
1.3	Director, Partnerships, schools and preschools	21/02/2019	23/11/2019	Updated onto new template, hyperlinks updated