

## APPENDIX A. DEVELOPING AND CHANGING DRESS CODES

Under Section 128(d) of the *School Education Act 1999* the school council (or board) determines, in consultation with students, their parents and staff of the school, a dress code for students when they are attending or representing the school. When determining the dress code, the school council and board must comply with State and federal human rights and anti-discrimination legislation.

A comprehensive consultation process must be undertaken in a manner that is appropriately respectful of different cultural, religious, ethnic and other special needs groups to ensure the dress code reflects the values and views of the entire school community. The consultation process could include letters to parents, surveys, public meetings, student meetings, information published in newsletters, websites or social media sites, and visual displays of fabric colours and types. Where appropriate in the local context, the consultation should also include material translated into community languages or the employment of an interpreter.

At the primary level a dress code entails a school uniform and clothing standards to cover the range of activities undertaken in a primary program. These may be less explicit and detailed than at the secondary level.

At the secondary level a dress code entails a school uniform and clothing standards to cover a range of study, training, work and sport options in which students engage. These may be explicit, detailed and mandated.

Councils and boards are encouraged to develop, as far as practicable, dress code requirements that do not discriminate on the basis of gender. This must include gender neutral options but may also involve items that are similar, but not necessarily the same, for all students. For example, a dress code could include gender neutral shirts and jackets for all students but may also include different styles of pants and shorts that suppliers categorise as male and female versions. Where community consultation indicates that gender specific items are popular (e.g. dresses, skirts) then it is appropriate to make those options available. In the case of female students, options must not be limited to skirts, dresses, shorts and culottes.

Dress codes should meet local circumstances, the needs of individual students and general safety and equity standards.

Consideration should be given to clothing that is affordable, comfortable, made from easy care fabric, appropriate for activity, and suitable for all body shapes. All clothing should be carefully considered to ensure students do not pose risks to themselves during vigorous activity; for example, hats with long strings and little sun protection are problematic.

The dress code may extend to other items if the school council/board considers it appropriate for local circumstances. For example, the dress code may specify:

- clothing for workplace, sporting and extra-curricular activities;
- headwear and footwear;
- safety requirements for outdoor and extra-curricular activities; and
- personal presentation of students, for example hairstyles and jewellery.

Links with suppliers, availability of garments, type, durability and manufacturer cost increases are some factors to consider, particularly when determining compulsory items.

Where a school includes logo-bearing items in their dress code for students, non-logo bearing alternatives, which are similar in style and/or colour, may be considered by the school council or board as a means of moderating the financial impact experienced by some families.

Changes to dress codes should be:

- based on advice from students, parents and staff;
- based on information from regular reviews of the dress code, including patterns of exemption granted to date; and
- introduced only after reasonable notification to parents.

Under Regulation 34 of the *School Education Regulations 2000*, parents and students must be provided with details of the school's dress code in writing at the time of enrolment and when there are changes to the code.