

Dress Code – Draft Document, June 2018

The following stakeholders were involved in the revision of The MDHS Dress Code: SAC Vice-President, SAC Equity Coordinator, Administration Team, and Student Body Representatives

Dress Code Philosophy

Ontario Regulations made under the Education Act mandates the creation of a School Dress Code for students. Representatives from stakeholder groups within Markham DHS will inform, and periodically review, our dress code so that is consistent with anti-oppressive educational practice. As such, the MDHS Dress Code will be communicated and consistently upheld in a manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization, stereotyping, or oppression of anyone based on race, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, household income, body type/size, or any other aspect of a person's social identity.

Our values are:

- MDHS students should be able to engage in the educational environment without fear of excessive and inconsistent discipline or body shaming
- MDHS students are responsible for managing their own personal "distractions" without regulating other students' clothing/self-expression.
- Dress code enforcement should not result in unnecessary barriers to school attendance.
- School staff should be trained and able to use student/body-positive language to explain the code and to address code violations.

The Five Goals of the MDHS Dress Code are to:

1. Ensure health and safety in classes where protective or supportive clothing is required, such as closed-toe footwear in a science, technology (automotive, construction, electronic), foods labs and athletic attire/shoes in physical education classes.
2. Affirm students' choice to wear clothing that expresses their self-identified gender.
3. Affirm students' choice to wear religious attire without fear of discrimination.
4. Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories with offensive images or language, including profanity, hate speech, pornography, or any other content that disrupts the learning environment or the rights of others. This includes content that reasonably can be interpreted as racist, threatening, defamatory, vulgar or obscene, or that creates a hostile environment for others.
5. Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that in any way reference alcohol, drugs or related paraphernalia or illegal conduct/activities.

Dress Code Implementation

Markham District High School expects that all students will dress in a way that is appropriate for the school day or for any school sponsored event. Student dress choices should support the goals of the MDHS Dress Code which contribute to a school climate that is inclusive of a diverse range of identities. The primary responsibility for students' attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). Any restrictions to the way a student dresses must be necessary to support the overall educational goals of the school as explained within this dress code. There are non-negotiable parameters for all clothing choices:

First and foremost, certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times.

Clothes must be worn in a way such that genital areas, buttocks, and breasts, are fully covered with opaque fabric.

Secondly, Students must wear:

- A shirt or dress (with fabric in the front, back, and on the sides under the arms), AND
- Pants/jeans or the equivalent (for example, a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress or shorts), AND
- Footwear

Note - Students cannot wear:

- Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments (visible waistbands and visible straps are allowed).
- Swimsuits (except as required in class or athletic practice).
- Any item that obscures the face (except as a religious observance).

Dress Code Enforcement

To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently using the requirements below. Students in violation of the Dress Code will be provided three (3) options to be dressed more to code during the school day:

1. Students will be asked to put on their own alternative clothing, if already available at school.
2. Students will be provided with temporary school clothing.
3. If necessary, students' parents may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear.

No student should be affected by dress code enforcement because of racial identity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity.

Students should not be shamed or required to display their body in front of others (students, parents, or staff) in school. "Shaming" includes, but is not limited to:

- asking students to account for their attire in the classroom or in hallways in front of others;
- calling out students in spaces, in hallways, or in classrooms about perceived dress code violations in front of others; and
- accusing students of "distracting" other students with their clothing.

These dress code guidelines shall apply to regular school days, as well as any school-related events and activities.