1. **What is this policy about?**

   1.1. This policy establishes the requirement for Canberra public schools, in consultation with the school board, to develop, document and adhere to school dress standards or authorised school uniform requirements.

2. **Policy Statement**

   2.1. Each Canberra public school, in conjunction with their school board, is required to develop and implement school student dress standards policy and procedures. This dress standard will entail a school uniform for primary and high school students. High school student uniform policy and procedures will include a formal style uniform option. High schools may choose to make this the sole option, or offer it alongside a less formal uniform option.

   2.2. Schools will expect students to abide by the dress standard while attending school or official school activities.

   **Exemptions and Modifications**

   2.3. Principals can grant to individual students short and long term modifications to their school uniform as well as exemptions to the wearing of the school uniform.

      • Modification and exemptions may be granted by the principal when the wearing of a uniform causes personal disadvantage outlined in anti-discrimination and human rights legislation, has implications for the student’s health, or ability to comply with requirements relating to their ethno-religious background.

   2.4. Schools can apply to the Director-General for an exemption from school uniform requirements for the whole school.

      • For a whole school exemption to be granted, evidence would be required to demonstrate that the wearing of a school uniform would significantly impact on the culture of the school.

      • Evidence would include survey data with a return rate that demonstrates significant engagement by the school community in a consultation process. Significant engagement would be demonstrated through a representative sample of the school community including students, parents/carers and teachers. The response rate should be at least equal to the response rate for the school’s annual satisfaction survey.

      • Documented support from the school board and school’s Parents and Citizens Association should also be provided.

      • Where a whole school exemption is granted by the Director-General, the school would still be required to address dress standards in their school policy.

3. **Who does this policy apply to?**

   3.1. This policy applies to all Canberra public schools, staff, students and parents.

4. **Context**

   4.1. Dress standards are a visible demonstration of the standards expected of students. A school’s dress standard plays an important role in promoting a positive image of the school.

   4.2. The benefits of a school uniform include:

      • assisting students to learn the importance of appropriate presentation
• promoting the safety of students through easier identification
• keeping costs of clothing within reasonable limits for parents
• promoting a sense of a school identity and belonging among students.

4.3. The Dress Standards and Uniforms in Canberra Public Schools policy, procedure and guideline are consistent with the requirements of work, health and safety legislation, anti-discrimination and human rights legislation which protect the rights of students to participate in education safely, actively and equally.

5. Responsibilities
5.1. The Principal: is responsible for developing and implementing a school dress standards policy and procedure.
5.2. School Board: is responsible for approving the school’s dress standards policy and procedure. The school board should also ensure uniforms are sourced from ethical producers who are committed to an ethical supply chain and publishing a list of their factories and suppliers. This policy applies unless it is unreasonably cost prohibitive to do so.
5.3. Policy Owner: Director, Student Engagement is responsible for the monitoring, review and development of the policy.

6. Monitoring and review
6.1. The Policy Owner will monitor this policy. This includes an annual scan of operation and review. A full review of the policy will be conducted within a three year period.

7. Contact
7.1. For support contact Student Engagement Branch on (02) 6207 0457 or email ETDStudentWellbeing@act.gov.au.

8. Complaints
8.1. Any concerns about the application of this policy or the policy itself, should be raised with:
• the school principal in the first instance;
• the Directorate’s Liaison Unit on (02) 6205 5429;
• online at http://www.education.act.gov.au/contact_us;
• see also the Complaints Policy on the Directorate’s website.

9. References
9.1. Definitions
• Dress standard: A dress standard is a detailed written statement of the expectations that a school board holds regarding student appearance. Dress standards require primary and high school students to wear a school uniform and will define specifications for garment design. Dress standards for students attending a college will set out broad guidelines as to the appearance of students which may or may not include a school uniform.
• Formal style uniform: A formal/ traditional style consists of clothing with neat appearance which may include collared shirt with buttons down the front, dress trousers and/or shorts, skirts, dresses, knitted jumpers, and blazers.
• Parent/s: Includes all people who have parental responsibility for a child or young person.
• School uniform: A school uniform consists of a limited range of clothing, including footwear. It identifies students as belonging to a particular school.

9.2. Legislation
• Discrimination Act 1991 prohibits schools treating students unfavourably on the basis of sex, gender identity, race, religious conviction, pregnancy, disability and other protected attributes. This Act also prohibits indirect discrimination i.e. where a requirement or rule is the same for everyone but has an unequal or unreasonable impact on a particular group of
people. Relevant to this policy, the following Commonwealth Legislation also cover discrimination on the following grounds:
  o **Disability Discrimination Act 1992**: discrimination on the basis of physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disability, physical disfigurement, disorder, illness or disease.
  o **Racial Discrimination Act 1975**: discrimination on the basis of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.
  o **Sex Discrimination Act 1984**: discrimination on the basis of sex, marital or relationship status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breastfeeding, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.

- **Human Rights Act 2004** provides that it is unlawful for public authorities to act in a way that is incompatible with a human right but allows for most human rights to be subject to reasonable and proportionate limitations by public authorities. Consistent with the Right to Education. The school uniform policy and school dress standard should be implemented in such a way to ensure students are not prevented from accessing education.
- **Work Health and Safety Act 2011** requires schools to eliminate or minimise risks to students’ health and safety while at school and participating in school programs.

9.3. **Implementation Documents**
  - Dress Standards and Uniforms in Canberra Public Schools Procedure
  - Dress Standards and Uniforms in Canberra Public Schools Guideline

9.4. **Related Policies and Information**
  - Sun (UV) Protection for Students Policy