

Board adopts new uniform policy

By **TIM WHITNELL**
Metroland Media Group

The Halton Catholic District School Board has a new school uniform/school dress code policy.

Three months after rejecting an amended policy, trustees with the board recently voted unanimously to adopt an updated policy.

Among the major changes to the old policy is the adoption of a school uniform dress code at any school where the school community vote is a simple majority in favour, 50 per cent plus one vote.

Under the previous policy, a two-thirds majority of votes by parents was needed to implement a uniform dress code at a specific school.

Community votes are now to be scheduled for later in any given school year preferably in February or March.

Each school community must vote on school uniforms at least once. The uniform vote can be revisited every three years.

Elementary schools that have never held a uniform vote are expected to hold a vote this March.

Every family with children confirmed as pre-registered for the next school year is eligible to vote. However, if the youngest child in a family is in Grade 7 or 8, a family would not be eligible to participate in the vote.

In the first year of implementation, Grade 8 students can wear a uniform but will not be required to do so.

The uniform colours at all elementary schools will consist of a combination of navy blue and white only. Only a school

logo or name is allowed on school uniforms, no advertisements.

All elementary schools must adopt an elementary school dress code if they have not adopted an elementary school uniform.

An elementary school's student dress code is to be in keeping with Catholic teachings and beliefs, and reflect principles of physical modesty.

Conversely, an elementary school that has school uniforms can, upon the recommendation of its committee, choose to conduct a vote to discontinue using school uniforms.

The board will deal with families struggling or unable to purchase the required clothes for their children.

"If a school has voted for a uniform (dress code), then they (students) are expected to wear a uniform, but it is understood that if there is financial difficulty the family should speak to their principal. We would work towards having a uniform provided for the child," said Halton Catholic board chair Diane Rabenda.

Rabenda said the policy has been subject to a lot of attention, with about 20 meetings held.

McCarthy's is the board's current uniform provider, in its second year of a three-year contract.

Every registered family with children in JK-Grade 6 of the current school year is eligible to vote for a uniform dress code at their school and receives one ballot.

The voting process can't go more than two weeks but can't be completed sooner than one week following a community information night.



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