

Sunrise Waldorf School

Dress Code

School Values & Photo Guidelines





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Dress Code Overview

At Sunrise Waldorf School, the way we dress is part of how we participate in community life. Our dress code is grounded in shared values rather than a long list of rules. Its purpose is to help students develop awareness, responsibility, and agency as they learn to make thoughtful choices about how they present themselves in different settings.

School is a shared learning environment. Clothing should support students in being comfortable, active, engaged, and ready to participate fully in the life of the school.

Dressing for Community

Our dress code is supported by students, parents, teachers, and staff alike. It reflects our shared responsibility to help create an environment that is respectful, welcoming, and conducive to learning.

As children grow, they are increasingly able to consider not only what they personally enjoy wearing, but also what is appropriate for the community and setting they are entering. Learning to make this distinction is an important life skill. What may be suitable in a private, recreational, or social setting may not always be the best choice for a classroom, school gathering, festival, or community event.

Rather than asking only, *"Am I allowed to wear this?"*, we encourage students to begin asking: *"Is this a good choice for where I am going, what I will be doing, and the people I will be with?"*

Ready for Learning

School clothing should allow students to move freely and participate safely and comfortably in the full range of school activities. This may include classroom learning, outdoor play, movement, practical arts, gardening, physical education, performances, and seasonal activities.

Clothing should also support a learning environment in which the attention of students and teachers can remain focused on the work and relationships of the day. Attire, images, words, or accessories that significantly distract from learning, interfere with participation, or conflict with the respectful nature of the school community may need to be changed or adjusted.

Our intention is not to prescribe individual style. Students are encouraged to express themselves while learning that personal choice exists alongside consideration for others and for the setting we share.

A Shared Responsibility

Students, families, teachers, and staff each have a role in supporting the dress code. Families help children arrive prepared for the school day, while students gradually take greater responsibility for their own choices as they mature.

Teachers uphold these expectations consistently and respectfully. When questions arise, conversations will be grounded in relationship, dignity, and the educational purpose of the dress code rather than punishment or embarrassment.

Reasonable accommodations may be made for health needs, religious observances, or documented learning recommendations. When dress expectations become an ongoing concern, a team composed of teachers, families, students, and/or administration will work together toward a constructive solution.

Ultimately, our goal is larger than appropriate clothing. We want students to leave Sunrise with the ability to read a situation, understand the needs of a community, and make thoughtful choices for themselves. The dress code is one of the many ways we help children practise that growing independence and responsibility.



Dress Code Values

Our dress code is grounded in three shared values: **Respect, Safety, and Focus**. Together, these values help students understand that clothing choices are not only personal; they also affect how we participate in learning and how we contribute to the wider school community.

Respect

Respect means upholding shared standards with kindness, inclusion, integrity, and awareness of others. Expectations for this school value include:

1. We dress for community and equity
2. Trends are for weekends, school is for learning
3. Underwear remains under your wear
4. Private parts stay private
5. Midriffs are covered

Safety

Safety means dressing in ways that support active participation in the work and learning of the day. At school, this looks like:

6. Safe, fitted footwear for the task
7. Hands are free to work
8. Movement and comfort in all types of weather
9. Clothes fit and are in good repair

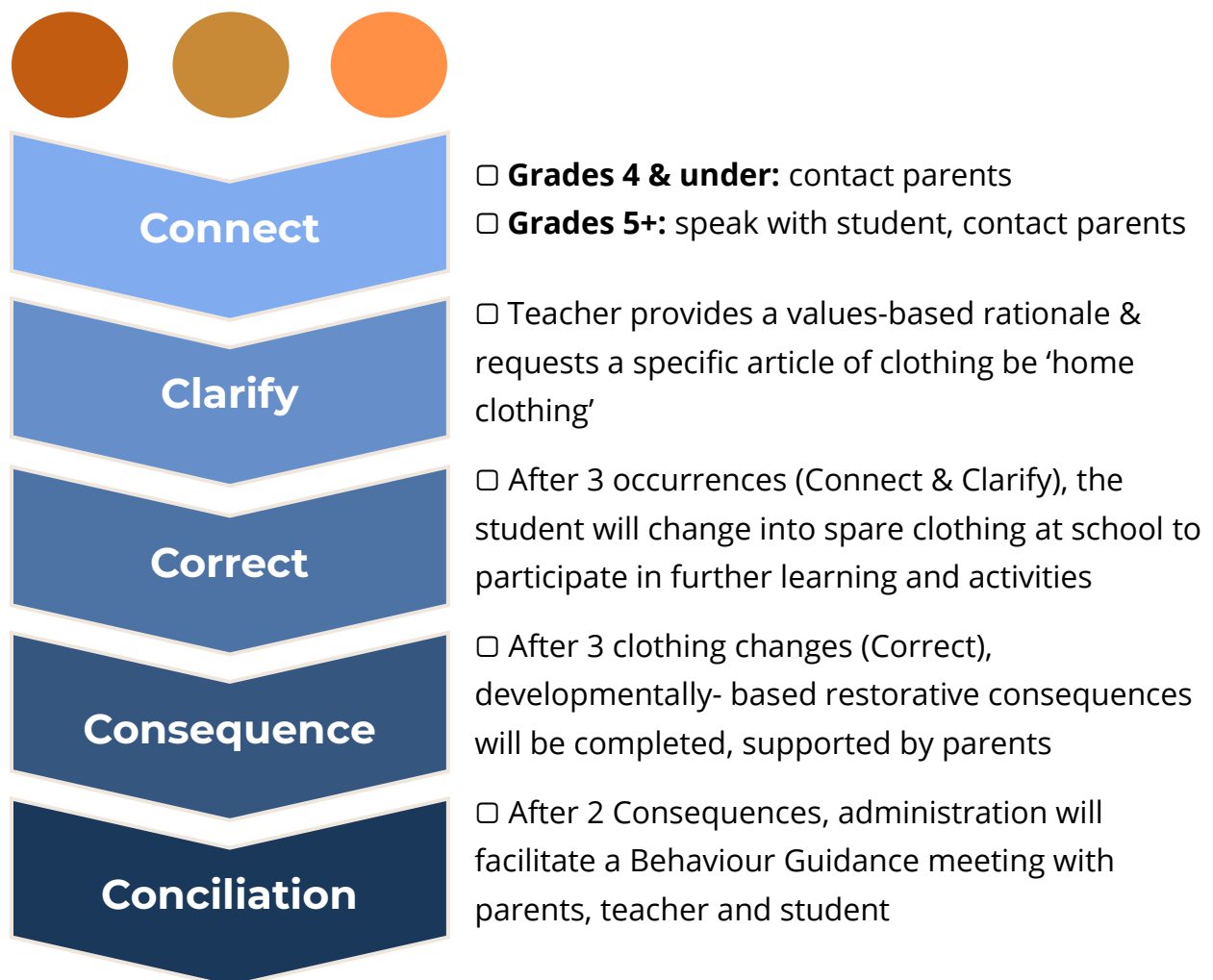
Focus

Focus means making choices that help maintain a learning environment with minimal distraction. School dress supports the following:

10. Words are positive/neutral
11. Images are neutral and nature based
12. Logos, branding and media are discrete and fit under a single sticky note.
Complete absence of characters and media in Preschool/Kindergarten (ECE)
13. Sparkles and shine come from within
14. Technology and gadgets stay home

Alignment Process

When a clothing choice does not align with the school's dress code values, our first response is conversation, clarity, and support. The Alignment Process provides a consistent, developmentally appropriate way to help parents and students understand the concern, make a different choice, and restore alignment with the shared expectations of the school community. Because a values-based dress code responds to the needs of the learning environment rather than a fixed list of rules, teachers may use professional discretion to identify clothing as distracting or unsuitable for an activity, developmental stage, or emerging classroom need.



Questions & Guidelines

Frequently Asked Questions

These questions offer practical examples of how our shared values of **Respect, Safety, and Focus** guide everyday clothing choices. They are not intended to create a new list of rules, but to help students and families understand how the values of the Dress Code are applied in familiar situations.

1. Can I wear a jersey or sweater for a team or club I participate in?

Yes, provided it meets the school's guidelines for logos and branding. Clothing connected to something a student actively participates in can be a meaningful expression of personal identity and can invite positive conversation. In the Grades, logos, branding, and media references should remain smaller than a sticky note. Preschool and Kindergarten clothing should remain free of characters and media references.

Value: Focus (12)

2. What about a jersey or shirt from my favourite professional sports team?

Yes, but only if it meets the school's guidelines for logos and branding. Professional sports teams are considered commercial branding, and most jerseys prominently display logos, player names and/or numbers or branding larger than our guideline allows. A small team reference that is smaller than a sticky note is permitted, however a player jersey is not.

Value: Focus (12)

3. Can I wear a sweater or t-shirt with a place I visited?

Yes. Clothing connected to a place a student has visited can reflect personal experience and invite meaningful conversation. As with other clothing, prominent commercial logos, branding, or media references should remain within the school's size guidelines.

Value: Focus (12)

4. What about a shirt from a concert I attended or one featuring a musician or band?

Usually, no. Bands, performers, television, films, games, and similar imagery are considered media references. In the Grades, a small reference may fall within the Dress Code guideline, but clothing featuring a performer or media image as its primary design is best kept as home clothing.

Value: Focus (12)

5. Can I wear my hat in the school or classroom?

Hats are removed when we come indoors. At Sunrise, this is a shared community practice that helps mark the transition into our indoor learning spaces and reflects our expectation of respectful participation. Religious, cultural, medical, and other appropriate accommodations are always respected.

Value: Respect (1)

6. Can I wear a fake nails? What about nail polish?

Nail polish is welcome in the Grades provided it does not interfere with learning or participation. Artificial or extended nails are best kept for outside of school because students need full and safe use of their hands for activities such as handwork, strings, woodworking, gardening, movement, and classroom work.

In Preschool and Kindergarten, nail polish and artificial nails are not part of our school dress expectations, reflecting the intentionally simple approach to adornment in Early Childhood.

Value: Safety (7)

7. Can I dye my hair?

In the Grades, hair colour is primarily a family decision. Hair choices should still support the learning environment; a style or colour that becomes a significant or ongoing distraction may be addressed through the Dress Code.

In Preschool and Kindergarten, we intentionally keep expectations around clothing and personal adornment simpler. No hair dye is permitted in these programs. This reflects the developmental needs of younger children and the Waldorf Early Childhood emphasis on an environment with fewer external distractions.

Value: Focus

8. What about jewellery?

Small, secure jewellery, such as stud earrings, may be worn if it allows full participation in the school day. Loose or dangling jewellery, including long earrings or necklaces of any kind, should remain at home because it can catch during movement, play, practical work, or equipment use. Items worn on the body need to be secure enough for students to move and participate safely.

Value: Safety (9)

9. May I wear clothing with sequins or lights?

Clothing designed to light up, flash, or strongly catch attention should remain at home. These features can repeatedly draw attention away from lessons, conversations, and classmates. At school, we aim for clothing that allows the person, not the clothing, to remain at the centre of our interactions.

Value: Focus (13)

10. Do I *really* need to bring a jacket or weather-appropriate outerwear?

Yes. Outdoor learning and play are part of every school day, and classes may be outside for extended periods and in changing weather. Students who are cold, wet, or uncomfortable have a much harder time participating fully and concentrating on their learning.

Families are asked to ensure students arrive prepared with the layers, rainwear, or outerwear appropriate for the day.

Value: Safety (8)

11. Can I wear ripped jeans or a favourite shirt with holes?

School clothing should be in good repair. Tears and holes can grow, catch during active or practical work, or result in areas of the body or undergarments becoming exposed during movement. Clothing that is significantly ripped or damaged is therefore best kept as home clothing.

Value: Safety (9)

12. Can I wear flip-flops or open-toed sandals?

No. Students move between many different activities during the day, including outdoor play, gardening, woodworking, physical education, and practical work. Secure, well-fitting footwear helps students move safely and ensures they are ready to participate wherever the day takes them.

Value: Safety (6)

13. Why does my midriff need to be covered? Crop tops are popular right now.

School clothing needs to remain securely in place through the movements of the day. Students regularly reach, bend, stretch, run, sit on the floor, and participate in physical and practical activities. Clothing should allow them to do so comfortably without repeatedly adjusting it or exposing areas intended to remain covered in our shared school environment.

Self-expression matters, and part of developing agency is also learning that different environments call for different choices. School clothing should support both participation and our shared community standards.

Values: Safety (8) and Respect (1,2)

14. Can my shirt have spaghetti straps?

Yes, provided the top remains securely in place and undergarments remain covered during normal movement. Students should be able to reach, bend, sit, run, and participate without needing to repeatedly adjust their clothing.

Value: Respect (3)

15.What length of shorts are permitted?

There is no required measurement or specific length. Bodies and proportions differ, so we focus instead on function and coverage. Shorts should remain securely in place, allow unrestricted movement, and fully cover underwear and the buttocks when a student is sitting, bending, running, or playing.

A useful question for students to ask themselves is: “Can I move through my whole school day comfortably without exposing myself or continually adjusting my clothing?”

Values: Respect (1, 4) and Safety (8)

Photo Guidelines



Focus:

(11) Images are neutral and nature based, (10) words are positive/neutral

To Wear:



Not To Wear:



Focus:

(12) Media fits under a single sticky note (note: complete absence of characters and media in Preschool/ Kindergarten)

To Wear:



Not To Wear:



Respect:

(12) Media fits under a single sticky note (note: complete absence of characters and media in Preschool/ Kindergarten)

To Wear:



Not To Wear:





Focus:

(11) Images are neutral and nature based, (12) Media fits under a single sticky note (no characters or media in Preschool/Kindergarten)

To Wear:



Not To Wear:



Respect:

(1) We dress for community and equity, (12) Midriffs are covered.

To Wear:



Not To Wear:



