

COBURG HIGH SCHOOL

Uniform and Dress Code Policy

Rationale

Our four core school values are Excellence, Integrity, Curiosity and Community and our uniform is an important aspect of building and maintaining a strong sense of community. Coburg High School is a large and growing community of students from diverse family, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Coburg High School is committed to supporting all students to develop their identity, responsibility and autonomy in a range of ways. We believe that it is important to unify students across year levels, strengthen our sense of community, and foster a sense of belonging at Coburg High School. The uniform provides not only unity among students but also distinction as a school.

This policy outlines the multiple aims of our uniform. It considers the contribution a uniform can make to supporting a learning community, fostering pride in our school and in our appearance, providing consistency in expectations and clarity about acceptable attire, upholding our duty of care for the safety and security of students, reducing the time and cost associated with purchasing items, promoting sustainability and active learning, and promoting equality and inclusion.

The school is responsible for implementing and enforcing student uniform and dress codes appropriately.

Principles

1. Belonging

Our uniform aims to foster our students' sense of belonging to the Coburg High School community.

2. School pride:

We want students to be proud to wear the school uniform. The aim for our uniform is to be a visible sign of the Coburg High School community and acceptance of our progressive school values.

3. Function:

The aim for our uniform is for students to be comfortable in all climates, and to be sensitive to and accommodate the diversity of body types and sensory needs. The uniform aims to be suitable for a range of learning activities and includes a 'family' of uniform items that provide options for differing needs.

4. Equality and inclusion:

We aim to enable all students to feel included as part of the school community and participate fully and equally in school life. The uniform aims to be sensitive to and accommodate the diversity of identity, family, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and contexts. All uniform items can be worn by all students throughout the year.

5. Student safety:

The uniform aims to ensure students are safe at school, and are identifiable as Coburg High School students in the wider community.

6. Clarity and consistency:

Our aim is to provide clarity and consistency for students, their families and school staff about appropriate and acceptable uniform.

7. Sustainability:

Our uniform aims to provide ethical and sustainable uniform options which consider fabric, durability and recyclability.

Legislative basis for the uniform policy

The Ministerial Order under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 authorises the school council to develop and implement a dress code that covers any matters which a school council considers appropriate in relation to:

- clothing and other items worn, carried or used
- grooming
- physical appearance and the general presentation of students

Section 26(1)(c) of the Education and Training Regulations 2017 states that “the principal of a government school may determine the consequences to be imposed on a student for not wearing the school uniform in accordance with a determination on school uniforms made by the school council and any Ministerial Order in relation to student discipline, but the principal must be satisfied that the student's failure to wear the uniform was because of the student's disobedience, that the consequences must be reasonable, and that the dress code policy has been brought to the attention of the students and parents.”

Section 42 of the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 states that “an educational authority may set and enforce reasonable standards of dress and appearance for students, where a standard of dress and appearance for students is considered

reasonable when the views of the school community have been taken into account in setting the standard.”

Implementation

The Coburg High School uniform is compulsory for all year levels from Year 7 to Year 12.

Information about the uniform items and where these can be purchased is available on the Coburg High School web site at www.coburg.vic.edu.au/uniform.

This policy applies during school hours, whilst travelling to and from school, and when students are engaged in school activities outside of school hours where the uniform is required.

All uniform items can be worn by all students throughout the year. There is no designated ‘winter-only’ uniform or ‘summer-only’ uniform and no gender based restrictions. Students are required to wear their uniform in good condition. Torn, ripped or modified items are not acceptable. Students are not to wear visible undershirts, long sleeve shirts or hooded items beneath the uniform.

Year 12 students will have the opportunity to purchase and wear a commemorative Year 12 top in addition to the school uniform. Year 12 students will also have the opportunity to be involved in the selection and design of this garment.

Uniform variations

Where there is a valid reason, the Student Support Team may approve an individual variation to the standard uniform. Such reasons may include, but are not limited to, temporary or permanent disability, religious, ethic, cultural beliefs or background.

Uniform-optional days/events

Students are permitted to wear alternative non-uniform clothing on nominated ‘casual dress’ days or theme-based costume/dress-up days as part of events such as Book Week, Pyjama Day, Superhero Day, Footy Colours Day etc.).

Dress code

The school's dress code standards are consistent with the aims of this policy, and key health and safety considerations.

Individual perceptions of dress code standards can vary considerably and the uniform establishes the expectations and standards of acceptable school-wear for all students to follow at school. We are mindful of the sensitivities of a diverse community of different ages, backgrounds and beliefs. This policy aims to provide clarity and consistency on the CHS uniform for students, their families and school staff, to reduce unnecessary conflict at home and at school over what is considered appropriate and acceptable school-wear.

Headwear

- Students are encouraged to wear wide-brimmed hats outside when the UV is 3 or higher, consistent with our SunSmart Policy
- Hats, including caps and beanies, are to remain in lockers during class time and are not to be worn indoors.
- Head scarves and neck scarves are permitted; they must be in the school uniform colours of navy or white.

Personal appearance

- Jewellery and cosmetics must be unobtrusive.
- Jewellery must not present a safety risk - students are not permitted to wear large hoops, bars or stretchings of excessive length.
- Fingernails (natural or as accessories) should not be excessive in length.
- Tattoos should be covered.

Footwear

- Footwear is open to student choice except that, for safety reasons, shoes must be substantial closed-toed shoes that support feet and are functional for all subjects and lessons, including physical activities like sport and dance and subjects with safety requirements such as science.
- High-heeled shoes, slippers and other non-supportive footwear, are not suitable for schools. Boots in place of formal shoes are allowed so long as they are not raised or obtrusive and are not to be worn for physical activities as they present a risk of injuries.
- On occasions, such as representing the school at an official event, students may be required to wear black shoes.
- Shoes and socks must not express slogans that are offensive in nature (i.e. derogatory, contain swear words or offensive statements etc.). Socks must not be obtrusive.

Enforcing the school uniform policy

If out of uniform, students are required to bring a written note signed by their parent or guardian/carer explaining why the student is not in uniform. If due to unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances, a student cannot wear their uniform, the student should substitute clothing that closely resembles the school uniform in the interim.

Hooded jumpers and leggings or skins are not permitted to be worn when out of uniform, even with an explanatory note.

Students may be required to wear school-supplied uniform items or, in consultation with parents/carers, return home when out of uniform.

Consequences apply for being out of uniform without permission. These consequences and processes will be consistent and will be applied in a staged manner. Appropriate measures for enforcing the school uniform include:

- Restorative conversations
- Fix It Time (FIT)
- Withdrawal from classes or suspension from school for any serious or persistent breaches.

Assistance with the uniform

Eligible families can receive financial assistance to help meet the costs of their child's education, including uniforms.

This support is provided by not-for-profit organisation State Schools' Relief (SSR) and more information and support is available to families at the school office.

The school encourages and accepts donations of school uniform items (either second-hand or new) which can be used to further support families as needed.

Review of the uniform code and consultation processes

School council will review the uniform policy every two years. Consultation with parents, carers, students and staff will be undertaken and may include surveys and focus group meetings.

The consultation process will explain the purpose of the uniform code and the reason for any proposed changes, and enable opportunity for the viewpoints of parents, carers, students and teachers to be expressed. School council will seek out the

views of different groups within the school community and will consider feedback. A reasonable timeline for the implementation of any amendments to the uniform policy, dress code and the introduction of any new uniform items will be provided to students, families and carers.

Parents, carers, students or staff who have concerns about the uniform may communicate those concerns in writing to the principal as executive officer of the school council so that concerns and views can be considered when the uniform policy is next reviewed.

Policy approval

- Ratified by uniform sub-committee: September 13th 2022
- Ratified by school council: December 15th 2022
- Next review date: 2025