



Dundas Central Elementary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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Dear families,

I am writing to let you know that we are reviewing concerns you may have seen regarding a recent discussion at our school regarding appropriate dress.

At Dundas Central, we apologize for a conversation about appropriate dress that treated male and female students differently, while alienating those with non-binary identities. We also apologize for implying that the way girls dress could be a factor in unwanted male attention.

We caused harm. We are working to address it and ensure it does not happen again.

At Dundas Central, we strive to create safe, equitable, welcoming and inclusive learning environments. Student dress is an aspect of a school environment, and should not impact the feelings of safety and inclusion in our shared spaces.

Students have the right to express themselves through clothing. Historically, dress codes have unfairly targeted women and have stifled the identity of Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities. These inequities must change.

With anticipation, we are watching the notice of motion that HWDSB student trustees submitted for the board meeting on Monday, October 18. The notice of motion asks trustees to direct staff to remove outdated standards, and develop a new policy/procedure that supports a safe school environment on the principles of an anti-oppressive, non-discriminatory, equitable and inclusive education.

This is an important and timely discussion, and we look forward to measures that can advance equity, inclusion and freedom of expression. Reviewing dated dress code guidelines, whether at the school or board level, is a worthwhile task. This will involve new learning for staff as well as students.

Thank you for your understanding. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Laura Bartkiw
Principal