

Dear Dundas Central Community,

As we approach Halloween, the following practices are in place to ensure safety for students and staff during COVID times.

This direction is for all HWDSB schools, and was developed at the Board.

- Students can wear costumes to school as per prior years practice (e.g., no cultural appropriation, no offensive and insensitive costumes, no weapons, no costume masks that might impede vision, no inappropriate images, etc.)
- Students choosing to wear a costume should come to the school already wearing the costume and keep the costume on for the duration of the day.
- Student costumes must be able to accommodate a face covering as per COVID requirements.
- A costume mask is not a substitute for a face covering. A costume mask should not be worn over a non-medical mask or face covering because it can be dangerous if the costume mask makes it hard to breathe.
- No costume parades are permitted indoors or outdoors.
- No in-person assemblies are permitted.
- Activities must take place within a student cohort and not involve a mixing of cohorts.
- If classes would like include treats for students during activities, these must only be purchased and individually packaged treats (no home baked foods). There is no need to clean or disinfect prepackaged treats.
- Maintain safe practices including physical distancing and hand hygiene.
- Don't assume that all students will participate in Halloween activities. Remember there are students who do not celebrate and/or participate. Their choice should be respected and the activities that are planned in their class should not interfere with their schooling.

Cultural Appropriation and Costumes: Cultural appropriation means taking or borrowing a look or trait from a culture that is not your own.

Costumes that are based on people's culture are offensive, harmful and insensitive. The following are suggested questions, to reflect on when choosing a costume to avoid being disrespectful or offensive, that schools can share to their school community:

- Is my costume making fun of a group of people, their culture, religion and/or belief systems?
- Does my costume reinforce jokes and stereotypes about certain groups, cultures, religions and/or belief systems?

- Am I altering my skin color, facial/body features to make it like a particular race, ethnicity, or cultural group?
- Am I dressing up as a culture or borrowing from a religion that is not my own or is not part of my background?

Please reach out with any questions or clarifications.