



St. Odilia School

3495 N. Victoria • Shoreview, MN 55126-3895 • (651) 484-3364

April 21, 2005

Dear St. Odilia School Parents,

Over the last few months, a School Uniform Committee has been diligently reviewing our Uniform Code and code enforcement procedures. Our primary objective was to provide a clear and concise uniform code that would provide better guidelines for enforcement.

This committee was organized as a directive of the School Council as well as Administration. It is School Council's responsibility to decide *whether* the school should have a Uniform Policy; and in January, the council unanimously agreed that a Uniform Policy should exist. Administration is now responsible for approving and directing the enforcement of our uniform code. The School Uniform Code is scheduled for approval on Wednesday, April 27th.

Attached is the Uniform Committee document used to present this proposed code to School Council and Administration on Tuesday, April 19th. In addition, the Proposed School Uniform Code, effective September 2005; a Proposed Uniform Infraction Policy/Notice; and a list of questions and answers collected are included. Please take the time to read through this information as it provides background and reasoning behind the proposed changes.

Thank you to the parents who have provided committee members, council members, administration and teachers valuable feedback. Although all suggestions could not be incorporated into the Proposed School Uniform Code, please know that it all weighed into the overall process.

Sincerely,

The St. Odilia Uniform Committee

Maggie Towle, Chair
Robin Asleson
Dave Fink, Assistant Principal
Karen Gilray, Middle School Teacher
Ann Heller
Michelle Mechtel, Fourth Grade Teacher
Hope Scannell
Katie Selden, Fifth Grade Teacher
Deanna Turcotte
Anne Weiss
Carole Wroble
Suzanne Zobitz

St. Odilia Uniform Task Force Presentation

As a result of various complaints from teachers regarding difficulties faced in enforcing our current uniform code and parents regarding difficulties in interpreting our current uniform code, the School Council and School Administration assembled a Uniform Task Force to review the current uniform code. This committee was asked to make suggestions that would improve the code and make it *more easily* enforceable and *more clearly* defined. Infraction procedures were also reviewed. The last time the code was reviewed: 1996.

Leadership/Participants

A total of nine parents, two teachers and Dave Fink were desired. A flyer was sent out and a request was made in School Council minutes for volunteers to participate. Seven parents either volunteered or were asked to participate.

Maggie Towle volunteered to chair the committee; she is also on School Council.

Dave Fink, along with three teachers volunteered to participate: Karen Gilray (middle school); Michelle Mechtel and Katie Selden (elementary school).

Parent volunteers: Robin Asleson (also on School Council), Ann Heller, Hope Scannell, Deanna Turcotte, Anne Weiss (also on School Council), Carole Wroble, Suzanne Zobitz

Concerns and Comments

Collection process

- Concerns and comments were collected via the survey – Fall 2004.
- On February 10th an open forum was held to hear parent concerns or comments.
- Parents were invited to email concerns and comments to Maggie or Robin (Open Forum flyer).
- Each participant brought concerns and comments through conversations with others (teachers, administrators and parents).

Concerns Identified

- Inconsistency in uniform pant styles and color.
- Some pieces too hot during certain times of the year i.e., heavy sweatshirts, jumpers are hot.
- Difficulty enforcing a code that was too broadly defined.
- Sloppy appearance of the school children compared with other schools.

Principles Adopted

- The traditional red plaid and Crosier Cross/logo would remain.
- The school uniform is a visual sign of our school community.
- Students in uniform gain a sense of pride in themselves and their school.
- The uniform provides a sense of equality and directs the focus to learning.
- The uniform is an expectation and privilege when attending St. Odilia School.
- Parents are ultimately responsible for enforcement of the School Uniform Code.

Assessment & Results

The committee met several times to discuss options that would address concerns raised. In addition, St. Jude of the Lake provided us with an extensive review of area Catholic Schools' Uniform Codes and a review of various vendors. We met with the two largest vendors, Dennis and Donalds and visited Dennis Uniform.

A revised uniform code was developed (see attached).

Highlights:

- Recommend only one approved vendor: Dennis
- Change middle school culottes to new skort style.
- Middle School girls are no longer required to wear vest.
- K – 5 girls will wear the plaid skort; jumper will be discontinued.
- K – 5 girls will wear yellow polo or oxford with logo.
- Girls are allowed to remove their sweatshirts whenever they need. Shirt under sweatshirt must have logo.
- ALL SHIRTS must have monogrammed logo – boys and girls.

Why limit ourselves to just one resource?

The committee felt this was really the only way to control the pant and short styles, guarantee consistency in colors, eliminate fading issues and provide a true uniform look. It provides ease in enforcement.

Why Dennis?

In the end, we felt Dennis could provide us with the best overall service. They offer variety for all shapes and sizes and also have a “custom fit” uniform service if need be. All Dennis does is make and sell uniforms, which is not the case with any of the other vendors. Dennis seems to be truly a customer driven company.

Here is a bit more about Dennis.

- For over 80 years, Dennis has been in the business of selling school uniforms.
- Dennis manufactures over 80% of their uniforms in Portland, Oregon. (Made in America)
- The manufacturing plant matches garment color to an international pantone chip color, ensuring consistent color year after year.

- Less than 3% shrinkage on 95% of garments.
- Small joker tags are on all pants, providing, at a glance, identification for parents and teachers ensuring the students are in the correct uniform.

Getting the Correct Uniform:

- Dennis has computerized programs and personal documentation in place ensuring everything purchased is specific to the school.
- Dennis provides a school specific flyer identifying all official uniform pieces.

Shopping at Dennis:

- The Dennis store is in a convenient location. It is impressive, clean, orderly and easy to shop with children.
- There are four choices in purchasing: a local Dennis store located in Oakdale (Junction of 94 and 694), secure internet site, Toll Free National Customer Service, and Mail Order.
- Dennis will have a uniform sale at the school prior to the start of the school year (usually in July or August – school's choice).

Financial Benefits:

- 6% of all gross sales are donated back to the school through the Academic Fund Program.
- \$5.00 Uniform coupons are distributed to the incoming kindergarten class.
- Families in need can benefit from the Scholarship Uniform Program.
- Dennis strongly believes in supporting the schools with which it partners. They participate in numerous school fundraisers with donations.

Dennis Promotions:

- Dennis offers a 10% Early Bird Promotion in June of each year.
- Dennis has a polo sale every July. Buy 3 polos, get 1 at 50% off. Buy 6 polos, get 1 free.
- DENNIS Advantage cards – A card stamped for each \$10.00 in purchases. When filled (15 stamps), the customer receives \$10.00 off their next purchase.
- DENNIS Rally – The Rally division of DENNIS supplies customized apparel to teams, clubs and school bookstores including jackets, gym bags, blankets, hats, sweats, t-shirts and polo shirts as a fundraising opportunity.

Why are the jumpers being discontinued?

We are replacing the jumper with the skort largely because of the warmth of the building. Overall the children will be more comfortable. When the girls get warm, the jumpers are coming off and the girls are out of uniform with knit pants, leggings or non-uniform shorts and a top without a logo. Sometimes, the children are coming to school with the knit pants and are forgetting the jumper altogether.

Why have we added yellow?

Because, with all the girls in skorts, we felt it was important to differentiate between the middle school and the elementary school. Besides white, yellow looks the best with our plaid. The polo and the oxford are both available in yellow.

Does everything have to be purchased at Dennis?

Just about.

- Current polos with the monogrammed logo from Lands' End or Donalds are fine. *New purchases from Dennis only.*
- *All monogrammed girls' shirts must be purchased from Dennis.*
- *All skorts must be purchased from Dennis.*
- *All pants and shorts must be purchased from Dennis.*
- Socks/Tights – preferred resource is Dennis – but not required as long as they adhere to the code.
- Undergarments/shoes – not purchased at Dennis.

Has the committee considered the expense of this change for families?

Absolutely. Ten of us are parents here. But, we also realize that having a uniform in general saves us money every year. According to two surveys, back to school clothing costs per child not in uniform are \$300 - \$350 – excluding shoes. Dennis estimates about \$250 per child. (That would be approximately four polos, three pants, one sweater vest and two sweatshirts (boys) or four polos, two skorts, two sweatshirts and one pant (girls).)

This year, current school families may have to make a larger investment in their back to school purchases. After that, we are back to quality hand-me-downs.

How will this revised Uniform Code be enforced?

A large part of the problem with enforcement was that the uniform code was too broadly defined. By clearly defining uniform expectations and allowing only one vendor for our primary items, it will be much easier for parents to purchase acceptable clothing and for teachers to identify infractions.

The committee has also reviewed the infraction procedures and has proposed a revised Infraction Notice (see attached).

Closing Thoughts

The current policy/enforcement allows *FASHION* to play too big a part in the choices families are making. Colors and styles are inconsistent and fit is sometimes sloppy and in poor taste. We have chosen to have a uniform, thus we should look uniform in appearance.

A great deal of thought has gone into these recommendations. No decisions were taken lightly and we really tried to look at the policy from every angle. We came to realize that like most things in life, there is no *perfect* solution, but based on our work we felt this solution was the best. We are a diversified group of parents with children of varied ages and of different sizes and shapes; teachers of different age groups.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve on this committee.

Proposed St. Odilia Uniform Code Implementation Date: September 2005

Vendor: ONLY ACCEPTABLE VENDOR IS **DENNIS UNIFORM**

680 HALE AVENUE NORTH, SUITE 130

OAKDALE, MN 55128

PHONE: 651.702.0606

FAX: 651.702.4343

ORDER ONLINE AT: WWW.DENNISUNIFORM.COM

SCHOOL CODE: (pending)

Administration reserves the right to interpret and enforce the Uniform Code as necessary. One acceptable vendor has been selected for consistency of appearance, color and quality. This also allows for less subjectivity in enforcement.

Clothing should be marked for easy identification.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child is in proper uniform.

K – 5 Girls

<u>Choose one (1):</u>	<u>Choose one (1):</u>	<u>Optional ... Choose one (1):</u>
Red plaid skort (no more than 3" above knee)	Yellow uniform oxfordcloth button down shirt with monogrammed school logo – long/short sleeve	Red uniform sweatshirt with monogrammed school logo
Navy uniform twill pant*	Yellow uniform polo shirt with monogrammed school logo– long/short sleeve	Navy uniform cardigan with monogrammed school logo
Navy uniform corduroy pant*		Navy uniform vest with monogrammed school logo

*A black, brown, or navy uniform belt is required if the pant has belt loops.

*The pant option is permitted during the months of November, December, January, February, and March.

K – 5 Boys

<u>Choose one (1):</u>	<u>Choose one (1):</u>	<u>Optional ... Choose one (1):</u>
Navy uniform twill pant*	Red uniform polo shirt with monogrammed school logo – long/short sleeve	Red uniform sweatshirt with monogrammed school logo
Navy uniform corduroy pant*		Navy uniform cardigan with monogrammed school logo
Navy uniform walking short (no more than 4" above the knee)**		Navy uniform vest with monogrammed school logo

*A black, brown, or navy uniform belt is required if the pant/short has belt loops.

**The walking short option is permitted during the months of September, October, April, May, and June.

Middle School Girls

<u>Choose one (1):</u>	<u>Choose one (1):</u>	<u>Optional ... Choose one (1):</u>
Red plaid skort (no more than 3" above the knee)	White uniform oxfordcloth button-down shirt with monogrammed school logo – long/short sleeve	Red uniform sweatshirt with monogrammed school logo
Navy uniform twill pant*	White uniform polo shirt with monogrammed school logo – long/short sleeve	Navy uniform V-neck sweater with monogrammed school logo
Navy uniform corduroy pant*		Navy uniform vest with monogrammed school logo

*A black, brown, or navy uniform belt is required if the pant has belt loops.

*The pant option is permitted during the months of November, December, January, February, and March.

Middle School Boys

<u>Choose one (1):</u>	<u>Choose one (1):</u>	<u>Optional ... Choose one (1):</u>
Navy uniform twill pant*	White uniform oxfordcloth button-down shirt with monogrammed school logo – long/short sleeve	Red uniform sweatshirt with monogrammed school logo
Navy uniform corduroy pant*	White uniform polo shirt with monogrammed school logo – long/short sleeve	Navy uniform V-neck sweater with monogrammed school logo
Navy uniform walking short (no more than 4" above the knee)**		Navy uniform vest with monogrammed school logo

*A black, brown, or navy uniform belt is required if the pant/short has belt loops.

**The walking short option is permitted during the months of September, October, April, May, and June.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Shirts must be tucked into pants/shorts/skort at all times.
- Pants/shorts/skorts are to be worn at the waist at all times.
- Garments worn under shirts must be white/flesh colored and free of any designs.
- Navy uniform sweatshirt with monogrammed school logo is to be earned by the Middle School students.
- **Socks:** Girls – Navy or white anklets (must be 2" above top of shoe), knee high, or tights are acceptable. Boys – Navy or white socks (must be 2" above top of shoe).
- **Shoes:** Athletic shoes are **acceptable** for every day wear and are **required** for K-8 Physical Education. Black, brown, or navy soft soled, non-marking shoes are acceptable. Heel not to exceed 1". Shoes must be tied and the appropriate size for the student. Velcro shoes are acceptable. **No** roller shoes, slip-on shoes, or zipper shoes are allowed. **No** sandals or open-toed/open-heeled shoes are allowed.
- **Middle School Gym Uniform:** Solid colored (not white) t-shirt, free of printing and design. (Midriff must not be exposed if hands are raised above the head.) Shorts must be black, 60/40 Softe shorts, printed with *Knights Phys. Ed.* Purchase at Dennis. During cooler months, properly fitting sweat/warm-up pants. **No** tear-away pants. Additional outdoor clothing may be required for outdoor units depending on the season.
- **Hats:** Hats, caps, and bandanas are **not** allowed to be worn in the classroom except for authorized events.
- **Make-up:** Make-up is **not** allowed in grades K-5 with the exception of clear lip balm. Minimal make-up is allowed for Middle School girls.
- **Hair:** Hair must be neat, clean and out of eyes.
- **Earrings:** Earrings must be small. **No** body (nose, tongue, etc.) piercings of any kind are acceptable.

**Proposed School Uniform Code Infraction Procedure
(Infraction Notice attached)**

Parents/Guardians are expected to enforce the School Uniform Policy with their child(ren).

When a student is not in uniform, the following process will take place:

First Offense:

The teacher sends home with the student an Infraction Notice identifying the problem. The Infraction Notice must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the teacher the following day.

Second Offense:

A parent is called by an administrator and the infraction is explained. The student is sent home with a parent for the day. A second Infraction Notice is completed by the teacher or administrator. A re-entry conference with the student, a parent/guardian, and an administrator is required in order for the student to return to school.

**St. Odilia School
Uniform Code Infraction Notice**

_____ was not wearing the proper school uniform today, (date) _____.

The following checked items were out of compliance:

_____ Sweater/Sweatshirt/Vest	_____ Pants/Shorts length
_____ Skort	_____ Shirt
_____ Skort length	_____ Shoes
_____ Pants/Shorts Wrong Vendor	_____ Socks
_____ General Appearance: _____	

It is expected that this matter will be resolved and the student will be in compliance for the next school day. Please sign and return this form to the teacher indicating that you have discussed this with your child and that both of you will take the necessary steps to ensure compliance with St. Odilia School's Uniform Code in the future.

FIRST OFFENSE

Date returned: _____

SECOND OFFENSE

Date/Time of Pick-Up: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Teacher Signature / Date

Parent/Guardian Signature / Date

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are the uniforms changing?

Two things occurred this past fall that brought the uniform to the forefront. First, difficulties arose in the enforcement of the multiple styles of pants. Second, School Council did a survey which confirmed that a number of parents had uniform concerns. The School Council was asked to consider whether there should be a school uniform. All immediately agreed that there should. The School Council and School Administration then charged a Uniform Task Force to review the current code, make suggestions for improvement and make the code more easily enforceable. Concerns and comments were collected via the survey, an open forum, email, and conversation. A comprehensive document prepared by St. Jude of the Lake was also reviewed by the committee. This contained the uniform policies and enforcement procedures of 7 other local catholic schools' uniform policies.

It became clear that the current code was far too vague resulting in difficulties for parents who were sincerely trying to follow the rules. Large inconsistencies in student appearance then occurred. The teachers were having a tremendously difficult time enforcing all this variation and quite frankly sometimes gave up trying. They were losing valuable teaching time each day trying to determine which infractions were worth noting.

Keeping the enforcement issue always in mind, the committee tried to improve the current uniform code. The ultimate result was a mixture of already existing components of the current uniform code with a few new improvements. The committee tried to add some details to sharpen the general appearance and to address some issues of comfort - mostly those regarding the extreme warmth of the building.

Who is Dennis?

Dennis is a national company in business since 1920. Dennis exclusively manufactures and sells school uniforms. They have one store in the cities - located in Oakdale near the intersection of 694 and 94. Uniforms can be purchased at the store, over the internet (www.dennisuniform.com), or by phoning a toll-free National Customer Service Department at (800)854-6951.

Why are we using just one vendor?

The committee felt that this was the only way to address the short/pant issue, guarantee consistency, and resist the temptation of fashion trends. Dennis shorts and pants include a tag on the side seam which enables teachers to easily identify the product as in compliance with the uniform code.

Why are we no longer using the jumper?

We are no longer using the jumper because too many styles of shorts and pants were being worn under it. It was often being removed when the kids felt warm resulting in inappropriate pants as the uniform.

Will the middle school girls still wear the vest?

No. The vest is no longer part of the uniform.

Will the plaid be the same?

Yes! The red plaid is a unique, special feature of St. Odilia.

Will we keep the Crosier Cross?

Yes! The Crosier Cross is a symbol of St. Odilia (the person) in addition to the Crosier community. Although it is premature to make a statement given the Crosiers' future plans, it would be appropriate to keep the cross indefinitely.

Why the yellow shirt?

The yellow shirt distinguishes the Elementary from Middle School girls. The yellow is soft in color and matches the thin yellow line in our plaid.

Can I wear any of my old shirts?

Yes! All current polos with the monogram (from any previous vendor) are fine. New purchases will all be from Dennis.

Can I wear old shirts with the patch sewn on?

No. Only monogrammed shirts are acceptable.

Can I still buy the monogram patch in the office and sew it on?

No. The patches will no longer be sold. All Dennis shirts will have the monogram.

Does Dennis sell 100% cotton shirts?

No. Their shirts are a 60/40 cotton/polyester blend. An option would be to wear a 100% cotton undershirt under the uniform shirt.

Can I still buy shirts from Lands' End?

No. Lands' End will no longer have permission to print our monogram.

Can I wear old pants or shorts from Donald's?

No. Shorts and pants have been the biggest problem area in terms of defining, following, and enforcing uniform policy. All Dennis shorts and pants have an easily visible tag on the side seam which will allow for quick and simple enforcement.

Can I wear old culottes?

No. The girls will all wear the new skirt from Dennis.

Can all students remove their sweatshirts?

Yes! Now that all shirts will have the monogrammed logo, this is no longer an issue.

Do I have to purchase my socks from Dennis?

No! Socks may be purchased anywhere but must be solid white or navy - free of sports/company insignia and free of accessories. They must extend a minimum of 2" above the top of the shoe.

Do the students have to wear a belt?

Yes, boys and girls are required to wear a belt if belt loops are present.

Is there a required gym uniform, does it have to be purchased at Dennis?

Yes. There is a required gym uniform for middle school only. The shorts must be purchased at Dennis. The t-shirt can be purchased anywhere but it must be a solid/non-white t-shirt free of printing and design.

Will there be a swap sale this August?

No. The swap sale will resume late summer 2006.

Will Dennis come out to the school like Donald's did?

Yes! They will come to St. Odilia in July or August with a complete inventory of uniform pieces.

What should I do with all my old uniforms?

We ask that you keep the old uniforms for now. We are actively pursuing a parish, school and/or organization that provides for underserved children. We will set up a collection site at school and provide the delivery to their location.

What if we can't afford new uniforms?

Dennis has a Scholarship Uniform Program. Uniforms are provided at a discounted cost to families with financial need. See Bob Grose to be included on the list (all names are confidential).

When will the new uniform code be implemented?

The new code will be implemented September 6, 2005 - the start of the '05 - '06 school year.

Will there be a transition ("grandfathering") period?

No. The new code will go into effect in its entirety with the new school year.

Will this new uniform code be enforced?

Absolutely! A new "Out of Uniform Notification" will be in the Parent/Student Handbook this fall. We believe this new uniform code will have us all feeling proud of how the students look and allow the teachers to go back to what they do best.