

October 2025

Halloween is next week, and as a community, we feel that it is important to communicate some important things about costume choices.

We welcome and encourage students to wear costumes on Friday, October 31st. We would like your help in reminding students to keep it fun, not offensive. Sometimes, even with good intent, or without even fully realizing it, people wear costumes that can make others feel upset, insulted, or humiliated. We ask that everyone be respectful and that costumes should not cross the line that might promote sexism, racism, or appropriating culture.

Here are some guidelines to consider when selecting costumes that will be worn at school:

- Students need to be identifiable and visible to ensure safety. Costume masks, coverings, or make-up that results in staff being unable to identify students should not be worn.
- Costumes that depict violence, alcohol or drugs are not appropriate. Fake weapons should not be brought to school.
- Costumes that could be offensive or perpetuate a stereotype of someone's culture, gender, heritage, or religion are not permitted.

It's good to keep in mind that the following are NOT Costumes:

- RACE (black face/brown face)
- CULTURE (Indigenous regalia/dreadlocks)
- RELIGIOUS FAITH (religious figures/gods/saints/gurus/hijab)
- GENDER (gender switching for humour or to mock)
- TRAUMA (hangman's noose/weapons)

(Adapted with permission from SD41 resources)

So how do you avoid selecting a costume for yourself (or your child) that is racist, perpetuates stereotypes, and is harmful to others? We love these tips from writer [Maxine Kozak at Ryerson University](#).

“1. Are you using makeup to alter your natural skin tone? Such uses of makeup cannot be separated from their [historical context](#).

2. Does the name of your costume include an ethnicity in the title? These are caricatures of a group of people, not costumes.

3. Are you wearing garments or accessories traditional to a culture? Wearing a culture is not a fashion statement. There is a fine line between appreciation and appropriation.

4. Are you dressed as an offensive historical figure? Dressing as offensive historical figures can be construed as glorification, even if your costume is meant to be satirical. Just don't.

5. Is your costume “funny” because it mocks the real-life experiences of others? *Belittling the struggles of marginalized groups is never okay.*

Another important reminder for older students that attend schools with younger grades, it is everyone’s responsibility to create a safe environment for all students and to set a good example and think about how costume choice may impact others in the building.

We know that our Steve’s families are creative and there are a limitless number of costumes that don’t offend.

Rachael Corneil
Principal