

TYPE:	Administrative
TITLE:	Wearing of a Kirpan
NO.:	ADMIN-229
RESPONSIBILITY:	Vice President, People, Equity and External Relations
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
EFFECTIVE DATE:	September 2024

1. Introduction

Durham College (DC) recognizes that, under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), it is a human right to be free from discrimination based on creed, and that further, DC has the duty to accommodate sincerely held creed beliefs and practices to the point of undue hardship, where these are adversely affected by a requirement, rule or standard. DC respects the rights of those who observe the Sikh religion to wear a kirpan as a part of their religious beliefs.

2. Purpose

To affirm DC's commitment to providing an inclusive and respectful learning and working environment, as well as provide requirements for accommodating persons wearing a kirpan on DC's campuses and at all DC-sanctioned activities.

3. Definitions

Refer to [Durham College's Standard Definitions](#).

4. Policy statements

- 4.1. DC recognizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community and provides for equitable treatment, free of discrimination.
- 4.2. Each member of the Durham College community is aware of, and shares, the responsibility for creating and maintaining an inclusive working/learning environment, free from discrimination based on a protected ground, such as creed, under the OHRC.
- 4.3. DC is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment for the college community, as required by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
- 4.4. This policy does not supersede the policies of any non-college organizations.

4.5. This policy and procedure applies to all students, employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors and covers all property owned or leased by Durham College ("College property").

4.6. Wearing a kirpan shall be permitted, subject to the following conditions:

- The kirpan (hilt, blade and sheath) is not to be greater than seven (7) inches (17.8 centimeters) in length. Smaller kirpans are preferable;
- The kirpan must be worn under the clothing so it is not visible;
- The wearer must ensure the kirpan is sufficiently secured to render removal difficult, but not impossible. Two or three clasps should hold the kirpan in place; and
- The kirpan must not be removed from its sheath.

5. Procedure

The College reserves the right to periodically, in a private and sensitive manner, verify that the limitations with respect to kirpan length, security measures and concealment are met.

5.1. If the wearer misuses the kirpan, disciplinary measures may be imposed which may include suspending the right to wear the kirpan on campus or at a college sanctioned activity. For students, the Student Conduct policy's process will be actioned. For employees, the matter will be administered by the Human Resources & Equity Department.

6. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards have been considered in the development of this policy and procedure and it adheres to the principles outlined in the College's commitment to accessibility as demonstrated by the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

7. Non-compliance implications

Failure to comply with this policy may result in DC not meeting its legislative obligations and incurring legal liability. College policies on conduct (student and employee) may be invoked.

8. Related forms, legislation or external resources

- Occupational Health & Safety Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code