COLLEGE POLICY

Policy No. & Title:	**P-208 Wearing of a Kirpan**
Policy Sponsor:	Vice President, People & Culture and Career Services
Reference Cmtee:	Policy & Procedure Committee
Effective:	2023-07-01
Next Review:	2026-10-31

Purpose

The College respects the rights of those that are baptized observers of Khalsa Sikhism and those who observe the Sikh religion to wear a kirpan as a part of their religious beliefs. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for accommodating the kirpan on the College's campuses.

Scope

This policy applies to all College students, employees, delivery partners, affiliates, volunteers, contractors, and visitors.

Definitions

Kirpan: is a small ceremonial sword approximately 15 to 22 centimeters (6 to 9 inches) in length and, in Sikh religion is a symbol of courage, self-sacrifice, defense of the weak and righteousness. Wearing the kirpan is a requirement of being a Khalsa Sikh. The ceremonial knife symbolizes each individual's duty towards other human beings, particularly the poor and oppressed, and is worn on the person. This is not a weapon, and strict rules prohibit its use as such. It is never to be removed from its sheath. For safety reasons, two or three clasps hold the kirpan securely in the sheath, with a fabric belt (called a gaatra). The gaatra is worn across the torso, keeping the kirpan next to the body. Only Khalsa Sikhism requires that a baptized Khalsa Sikh is required to wear a kirpan, along with Kesh (uncut hair), Kara (a steel bracelet), Kanga (a wooden comb) and Kaccha (cotton underwear).

POLICY

1) Kirpans may be worn on campus only by students and employees who are observers of Sikhism and are able to demonstrate that they must wear a kirpan as part of their religious beliefs. However, wearing a kirpan shall be permitted subject to the following conditions:
    - The wearer must be a Sikh or must satisfy the College that the wearer sincerely believes that they must wear kirpan as a part of their religious beliefs.
    - Individuals may be requested to provide a letter from their Gurdwara (a place of worship) confirming that they are a Sikh. In cases where this is not appropriate or possible, a signed declaration by the student will be sufficient to meet the needs of the College.
    - The kirpan (hilt, blade, and sheath) is not to be greater than 22 centimeters (9 inches) in length, however smaller kirpans are preferable.
    - The kirpan is not to be worn visibly, but under the wearer's clothing.

- The kirpan must be sufficiently secured to render removal difficult, however not impossible.
- Modifications to a student's program may be necessary, depending on the nature of the program, where wearing of a kirpan may inadvertently cause physical harm to the wearer or another individual while participating in program activities or during off campus college authorized activities.
- That the right to wear a kirpan may be suspended by the College should there be misuse by the wearer.

2) The College reserves the right to, occasionally, in a private and sensitive manner, seek to verify that the limitations listed above are being respected and continue to be met.
3) A student/employee's right to wear the kirpan may be suspended by the College for failure to comply with the conditions noted above. For Students, the process identified in A-109 Student Code of Conduct will be utilized to resolve any issues. Situations involving employees will be administered by People & Culture.

Related Policies
A-109 Student Code of Conduct
P-103 Anti-Violence, Harassment & Discrimination

Supporting Documents/Forms
Ontario Human Rights Code, 1962
The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, 1982
Multani v. Marguerite-Bourgeoys, Comm. scolaire *(2006)*