

Fleming College Scented Products Guideline

Updated April 2025

Fleming College is committed to providing a healthy, inclusive, and respectful environment for all members of our community. In alignment with our values of equity and inclusion, and in response to increasing concerns regarding scent sensitivities and fragrance-related health impacts, we have updated our **Scented Products Guideline**.

This document is intended to increase awareness, foster respectful behavior, and promote the voluntary reduction or elimination of scented products in our shared spaces. Please note that this is a **guideline**, not an enforceable policy.

What Are Scented Products?

Scented products include (but are not limited to):

- Perfumes, colognes, and body sprays
- Lotions and creams
- Hair care products (e.g., gels, shampoos)
- Deodorants and antiperspirants
- Laundry detergents, fabric softeners, cleaners
- Air fresheners (including plug-ins, sprays, and scented candles) and deodorizers

Many of these products contain chemicals that are classified as respiratory irritants, neurotoxins, or allergens. Even products labeled as “unscented” may include masking fragrances to cover chemical odors, which can still affect some individuals.

Why Does This Matter?

Exposure to scented products can cause a range of symptoms in individuals with scent sensitivities or related medical conditions, such as:

- Headaches or migraines
- Breathing difficulties, cold-like symptoms or asthma flare-ups
- Skin or eye irritation
- Dizziness, nausea, or fatigue
- Insomnia, confusion, difficulty with concentration

Indoor air quality can be significantly affected by using scented products. In fact, indoor air is often more polluted than outdoor air due to the accumulation of chemical vapors from personal care products, cleaning agents, and air fresheners.

The Ontario Human Rights Code recognizes environmental sensitivities as a disability when symptoms and restrictions result in a substantial limitation. Employers and service providers, including postsecondary institutions, have a duty to accommodate individuals with disabilities up to the point of undue hardship. This includes scent-related disabilities.

This is not only a comfort issue but may also raise human rights concerns, particularly if the exposure exacerbates a disability protected under the **Ontario Human Rights Code** ([Section 11: Disability and Accommodation](#)).

Our Expectations

We ask all **students, staff, faculty, contractors, and visitors** to make a conscientious effort to:

- Avoid or minimize the use of scented personal care products while on campus.
- Choose fragrance-free alternatives whenever possible.
- Respect signage and communications designating certain areas as scent aware.
- Avoid using air fresheners, diffusers, or other fragrance-distributing devices in shared or public spaces.

Supervisors and managers play a key role in fostering a scent-aware environment. **They are encouraged to communicate scent-related concerns within their teams, support respectful dialogue around accommodations, and collaborate with relevant teams or service providers to minimize the use of scented cleaning and maintenance products in their areas.**

Appendix A – Supporting a Respectful Conversation (Employees)

When concerns arise related to scented products, employees are encouraged to approach the situation with empathy and openness. A suggested approach is:

1. **Choose the right moment:** Speak privately and in a non-confrontational way.
2. **Express your concern respectfully:** For example, “I’ve been experiencing some symptoms that I believe may be linked to scented products in our shared space. Would you be open to using fragrance-free products while we share this space?”
3. **Listen and share information:** You might refer them to this guideline or share general information on scent sensitivities.
4. **Seek support if needed:** Supervisors or Human Resources can provide assistance in navigating ongoing concerns.

If you are the individual being approached:

- **Listen openly and respectfully.** Avoid becoming defensive and allow the person to fully express their concern.
- **Ask clarifying questions if needed**, such as: “Can you help me understand which product might be causing discomfort?” or “Is there something I can do differently to help reduce your exposure?”
- **Be willing to adjust.** If possible, switch to fragrance-free products, minimize use, or take other reasonable steps to support a shared and inclusive space.
- **Consider this example response:** “Thanks for bringing this to my attention. I didn’t realize it was affecting you, and I’ll look into fragrance-free alternatives. Please let me know if it improves.”

Supervisors should model and encourage this open and accommodating dialogue and ensure that any scent-related concern is handled in a way that aligns with Fleming’s commitment to human rights and respectful workplace practices.

Appendix B – Guidance for Students

Students who are affected by scented products should not feel obligated to address these issues directly with peers or instructors. We encourage students to:

1. **Inform your faculty member** or course coordinator if exposure to scents in a classroom or lab environment is affecting your ability to participate fully.
2. **Reach out to Accessible Education Services** for support with navigating accommodations related to scent sensitivities.
3. **Use Student Services** as a resource to assist in finding respectful, supportive resolutions.
4. **Avoid direct confrontation** when unsure how to proceed—college staff are here to support you.

Need Support or More Information?

If you have concerns related to scent sensitivities or need guidance on how to reduce exposure:

- **Students:** Contact **Accessible Education Services** for support and potential accommodations at caes@flemingcollege.ca .
- **Employees:** Contact your **supervisor or human resources** for guidance.
- **Visitors:** You can contact the **Health and Safety Department** for information or help navigating concerns at safety@flemingcollege.ca .

Thank you for your efforts in helping make Fleming College a more inclusive and accessible environment.

Note: This guideline is provided for awareness and education. It does not constitute a college policy and is not enforceable. We rely on community cooperation and goodwill to promote scent aware practices.