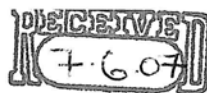


School Uniform Inquiry Submission 85

Ms Karen Ellingford
Executive Officer
Education and Training Commit
Parliament House
Spring Street
East Melbourne 3002

5 June 2007



Dear Karen

On behalf of the Bendigo Senior Secondary College community, we would like to respond to the Government Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools as invited in the Bulletin dated 4 May 2007.

Bendigo Senior Secondary College is the largest Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) provider in Victoria. The College is the only state provider of senior secondary curriculum in Bendigo, with the majority of students enrolling from our neighbouring 7-10 colleges: Eaglehawk Secondary College, Flora Hill Secondary College, Golden Square Secondary College, Kangaroo Flat Secondary College and Weeroona P-10 College, each having their own uniform requirement. Some students enrol in the College from areas outside these normal catchment areas. Students enrolling at Bendigo Senior Secondary College are doing so for the final years of their education.

For many years, decisions about uniform have been the responsibility of individual schools and their respective school councils, which has enabled decisions to be made that reflect the local needs of schools and their communities. We fully support the continuation of this ongoing local autonomy. Bendigo Senior Secondary College does not require students to wear a uniform, but it does have an appropriate code of conduct including a dress code, that is well supported by our students and parent community. This practice works well and fits into the ethos of our college which aims to provide an adult learning environment.

The additional financial difficulties that a uniform would place on individual students and their families for such a short period of time would be a major concern. Bendigo Senior Secondary College is identified as having a high proportion of students on Youth Allowance with 11% of our families being unemployed and 16% being identified as belonging to group D parental occupations.

We trust that you give due consideration to the need for schools to retain local autonomy on this issue and College council would urge that this local decision is then fully supported at the regional and departmental level.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Yours sincerely

Mr Dale Pearce
Executive Officer College Council
Principal

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