



Collingwood English Language School Council Submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools

Background information:

Collingwood English Language School (CELS), Department of Education, is a major provider of the New Arrivals Program in the Northern Metropolitan Region. It is a combined primary and secondary government school, which provides full time, intensive English courses for newly-arrived migrants and refugees prior to their enrolment in a mainstream school or further education. Length of stay in the school is generally from 6-12 months.

1. Collingwood English Language School Council (CELSC) supports the right of school communities, through their school councils, to make decisions about whether or not uniform should be adopted at their school, and if so, whether the uniform should be compulsory, recommended or take the form of a dress code.
 2. The Council believes that there are sufficient powers to enforce any school uniform policy within the Student Codes of Conduct adopted by many government schools, and that no further regulation of this matter is required.
 3. CELSC believes it would be inappropriate to have mandatory uniforms at Collingwood English Language School, as students' length of stay is very short (6-12 months), prior to enrolment in mainstream schools.
 4. The Department of Education should provide guidance to schools in relation to appropriate wear for particular activities, including such matters as adequate protection from the sun for students playing in the school grounds and for staff on duty outside.
 5. CELSC believes that if a school community chooses to have a school uniform, the uniform should be inclusive and respectful of the cultural and religious norms of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and allow, for instance, for trousers as well as skirts, tracksuits for sport, etc.
 6. CELSC believes that school uniform policies must not be used to prevent students from wearing significant and reasonable cultural or religious attire.
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7. CELSC believes that if a school community chooses to have a school uniform, the uniform should be affordable for low income families.
 8. Schools that opt for ready made uniforms should also be advised to be aware of the Fairwear campaign, and ensure that they are manufactured by companies that do not exploit outworkers.
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