

**Footscray City**



**Primary School**

**Hyde Street**

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**Tel: 9687 2826 / Fax: 9689 6591**

Friday 15 June, 2007

Ms Karen Ellingford  
Executive Officer  
Education & Training Committee  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
Melbourne, 3002

Dear Ms Ellingford

**Re: Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniform**

Thank you for your interest in the dress code at Footscray City Primary School.

Our school has a 'compulsory' school uniform and all students are encouraged to wear their uniform with the exception of specially declared 'out of uniform' days.

Our uniform is navy blue and sky blue, with the school logo on the pockets of the wind-cheaters, bomber jackets, shirts and hats. It is sold through the school although parents are advised that they are welcome to purchase elsewhere if they want to buy cheaper items. However, items with the school logo can only be purchased through the school. The school collects and recycles second-hand uniform for little or no cost to families in need. The school also maintains a 'social action' fund to which parents are invited to make donations, and this money is used for purchase of uniforms and other necessities for students in need. We also make use of the State Schools Relief Fund and the Court Fund to support a number of our students.

I interviewed a mainstream and a Steiner parent to gain their perspectives on the uniform and the responses were as follows:

- It provides an even ground.
- Great leveller – even more important with Steiner and Mainstream to smooth out the differences.
- It makes it easy for parents provided it is encouraged by parents.
- Adherence to the wearing of uniform is influenced by the class teacher – it permeates through the whole class.
- Parents know the school can't enforce so the classroom culture is the most important influence.
- Wearing of uniform strongly encouraged. No sanctions for non-wearing at present but considering introducing letters to parents when children out of uniform.

- It develops school pride and school identity and provides an even playing field with regard to multicultural and socio/economic issues.
- It is important for our school that the students are not seen to be different, it brings the school together.
- It is a compromise by Steiner with the state system. Independent Steiner schools do not have uniforms but encourage plain clothing without advertising on them.
- Steiner don't like the colour – would prefer a range of colours but not economically viable to carry the amount of stock required.
- Steiner would prefer cotton but understand the cost/supply issues.
- Our uniform is unlikely to be a factor in choice of school – other factors are more important.
- Uniform is basic/casual and unlikely to be an attractive option for parents wanting a 'private school' look.
- Health and safety issues centre around hats, shoes with enclosed toes and heels, and sunsmart fabric for shirts. Children without hats in terms 1 and 4 are required to stay in the shade at breaks. This is strongly enforced.
- Additional issue for school is the presence of two classes of students from the Western English Language School (WELS). These students do not wear uniforms and as many of these students are only at our school for two terms the provision of a uniform is problematic. Having these children out of uniform in the playground is a negative influence on adherence by our students.

Please let me know if I can provide any further assistance with your inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Win Warren  
Principal