

Galvin Park Secondary College

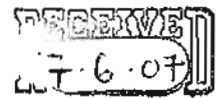
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Ms Karen Ellingford
Executive Officer
Education and Training Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
East Melbourne 3002

School Uniform Inquiry Submission 86

7th June 2007



Dear Ms Ellingford

The following is a submission to the Government Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools on behalf of the council of Galvin Park Secondary College.

Galvin Park Secondary College is a large secondary college located in central Werribee with Leading Schools Funding directed to the establishment of middle years open learning spaces. The College is undertaking and achieving renewal of curriculum; and, in relation to the present inquiry, renewal and re-imagining of itself through a more contemporary, more adult and more flexible dress code. This process began several years ago and the College has, in 2007, concluded its transitional period (from the former uniform to its current uniform).

The College Council meeting of May considered the terms of reference of this inquiry and the following response represents the consensus view of the council and its membership: parents, students, community members and teachers.

- The benefits and costs of mandatory school uniforms

The council strongly recognizes and endorses the benefits of mandatory school uniforms; it identifies these benefits as having an equalizing effect across the student body, as having a positive impact upon student safety - a mandatory dress codes makes students identifiable and recognizable as members of the school community. Those who are not members of the school community are therefore rendered more visible should they visit the school grounds – this is a significant benefit in a large school with extensive grounds.

The council recognises that the costs associated with a mandatory school uniform may be an issue and to accommodate the needs of parents this college makes the relatively expensive option of a blazer available but not mandatory.

- The views of school communities about dress codes and school uniforms

The view of this school community as expressed by its council is clear and unequivocal: a mandatory school uniform engenders pride, a sense of community

and is supported by the school community. These benefits particularly accrue when the dress code has been developed in a consultative process and recognises students needs for comfort and choice.

- The most cost efficient and practical uniform procurement arrangements

Galvin Park SC has an on-site retail outlet open part time for the sale of new uniform items. An extensive second-hand market also exists as does a trade or barter network among parents for uniform items.

For some students, the supply of uniform items through student welfare is arranged as is the purchase through EMA credit arrangements. This is an efficient method for items sold through the on-site retail outlet.

- Matters which need to be considered to ensure dress codes and uniform policies are consistent with anti-discrimination legislation and health promotion policies

This council believes that gender specific and 'uni-sex' options within a mandatory dress code best address these concerns. The college allows students complete flexibility with respect to school bags: some students elect to use a rolling case or backpack or carry bag.

- Appropriate enforcement and sanctions

This council recognises the need for enforcement and sanctions and recognises the need for proportionality in treatment of breaches on a case by case basis as well as proportionality in respect of the breach itself. The college has adopted and endorses a consultative approach.

- Appropriate exemption criteria and processes

The college employs a consultative, case by case approach as a basis for responding to exemption requests and is able to accommodate the needs of individuals within a mandatory code.

- National and international trends

Council noted that its exchange students have endorsed a dress code approach; and students and staff on overseas tours to a sister school in the USA have seen the general acceptance of dress code and uniforms.

Yours faithfully

Nicholas Lynch

Peter Newland
Principal

Acting for