



HAWKESDALE
P12 COLLEGE

Wednesday 30 May 2007

Ms Karen Ellingford
Victorian Parliamentary Education and Training Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
MELBOURNE

Dear Karen

I am writing on behalf of Hawkesdale P12 College School Council. The Department of Education circular informing School Councillors of the *Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victoria* was discussed at our May Council meeting. Our Council endorses the parliamentary committee's interest in this aspect of school policy and looks forward to clear guidelines in the final report.

Each year our council devotes much of the meeting time addressing school uniform. We strongly support the policy of school uniform as a cheapest way for families to clothe students for school. School uniforms provide an important public image for the school in their communities. They also enable all students to present on an equal terms with their peers regardless of the families financial circumstances.

School uniforms must consider the students daily tasks when they are being designed. Female students must have an alternative to school skirts or dresses to maximize their participation in all activities around the school campus. Trousers, shorts or culottes are alternatives for the seasons for female students. Other items of the uniform must consider the development of the young students, be comfortable and safe. To this end we believe that leather school shoes are important for safety in practical classes, including Art, Food Technology, Wood Technology, Systems, Metal Technology etc. Students should also have available a practical sports uniform that is reasonably inexpensive and easily maintained.

There should not be any copyright on school uniforms. Recent investigation for new school winter skirt for a neighbouring school presented the government school with a threat of legal action from one of the regional catholic colleges if they decided upon a particular tartan design. The catholic school claimed the tartan was their property and couldn't be replicated by another school even though there existed over 100km between the schools.

Uniforms must be accessible for all families and predominately locally manufactured from natural fibres. Hawkesdale is a rural community set in the Western District with wool as the major agricultural industry. The wool jumpers the school has selected are made locally and sell at the school at \$60-\$80. They are washable and long lasting.

Our major difficulty in ensuring all students are compliant with full uniform is gaining the support of the parents. Some don't support the compliance and hence their child endures the consequences which don't guarantee future compliance. We would welcome suggestions or guidelines in the parliamentary inquiry into the aspect of compliance for councils.

Yours sincerely

Jane Maine
Principal