

May 24, 2007

Melton Primary School Council
Melton Primary School,
Unitt St, Melton. 3337

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

Re: Government Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in
Victorian Schools

Dear Ms Ellingford,

The School Council of Melton Primary School would like to express an opinion with regard to the current inquiry into dress codes and school uniforms in Victorian schools. As a council, we support the standpoint of mandatory school uniforms for all children. The topic was discussed at length during the May School Council meeting, at which time the council agreed that the wearing of a school uniform was preferable for reasons outlined as follows:

- A consistent dress code acknowledges immediate identification and recognition as a member of a particular school community. It is a unique, public representation of an individual school within a community that potentially increases a school's profile in the greater community.
- A consistent dress code promotes a sense of individual and collective pride and provides a strategy for individual student safety and group security.
- A consistent dress code across the school promotes a sense of acceptance and belonging amongst peers within their school community. Students feel more accepted as equals amongst their contemporaries and less pressured into meeting often unachievable expectations with regards to clothing, bearing in mind monetary limitations .
- As a council, we are well aware of the financial implications that a mandatory uniform may place upon some families; however we believe that most schools are able to set realistic expectations with regards to the

purchase of their uniform items, specific to the financial circumstances of their community.

- With regards to current national and international trends, we feel that the wearing of head scarves for example, should be welcomed and accepted as a cultural norm. School uniform policies should be formulated to accommodate cultural dress requirements that comply with particular ethnic or cultural backgrounds. This could be achieved simply by including headscarves in school uniform colours.

- All prospective students and parents should be notified of a school's dress code requirements prior to enrolment.

- Dress codes should apply during school hours, while travelling to and from school, and when students are involved in school related activities out of school hours, with limited exceptions.

- School councils, in consultation with the Principal, should review and amend student dress codes should emerging safety issues or significant changes within the school community occur.

- School uniforms should be well maintained and worn in a neat and tidy manner. They should not be modified based on trends or current fashions, nor display commercial logos.

- School uniform policy needs to ensure that all students are aware of exact expectations and consequences for failure to comply.

Joanne Hopkins

Principal

Melton Primary School.