

# School Uniform Inquiry Submission 36



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Subject comments regarding Dress Codes and School Uniforms

6<sup>th</sup> May 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

DoE circular S159-2007 was discussed at our School Council meeting recently and the parents on council asked that their comments be passed on to the Committee.

Parents were unanimous in their support of a school uniform.

Reasons supporting school uniform were:

- Developing a sense of belonging to the school community.
- Uniforms are equitable for all students.
- The cost of purchasing a uniform is cheaper than having to dress your child in casual clothes each day. Our school is in a low socio-economic area and many parents struggle to provide basic necessities for their families. State School Relief, and the school itself, often provide support to families when they have difficulty purchasing school uniform. This support would be more difficult to provide if there was no school uniform.

Last year our school changed uniform suppliers and we now sell the uniform through our school. This has allowed us to provide a good quality uniform to families at a reasonable price. It does take time and space to set up, however the broader benefits of increased numbers of students in full uniform, availability of uniform at enrolment time and a greater sense of belonging and pride in the school are far greater benefits.

In the development of our school uniform (we were once a school with no uniform) it has been important to involve all members of the school community in discussions. Our senior students had input into the design of the senior school rugby top and student representatives on the SRC also had input into the design of the uniform. In recent years our school has seen an increase in the number of Muslim students and our school uniform was added to in order to meet their cultural requirements. Muslim girls are able to wear a hijab and long dress in school colours as part of our uniform. This inclusion has allowed these students to feel part of the school community and we have not experienced problems with other students regarding these additions.

Parents feel that the enforcement and sanctions of our uniform policy are fair. Students receive a warning if they are out of uniform, however if they continue to be out of uniform there is follow up to ensure that the family does not need support with purchasing uniform. If they do it is provided. If, however there is no legitimate reason for the student being out of uniform a lunchtime detention may be given, the family contacted or the piece of nonuniform clothing removed for the day (eg hat, jacket). The school community is made aware of our uniform policy and requirements through information in the student diary and through newsletter articles. Families of new students are given information about the uniform requirements at the time of enrolment.

The school has provision for exemptions to the uniform policy. For example if there is a medical reason, the family is asked to provide a doctors letter outlining the issue, this occurs with school shoes sometimes, and the school is able to provide the student with either a temporary or permanent uniform pass.

On behalf of the Merrilands College School Council.  
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