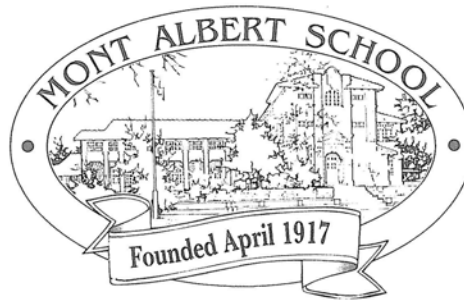


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Monday, May 7, 2007

Ms K Ellingford, Executive Officer,
Education and Training Committee
Parliament House, Spring St
East Melbourne, 3002

Dear Ms Ellingford,

Response to Government Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools.

This is my fiftieth year as a teacher with the Department of Education in Victoria. I have been a member of the Principal Class for the last 31 years and during my career have worked in country schools, provincial city schools and city schools.

I am pleased to learn that the Government is to address Dress Codes. One difficulty I have often faced in those years is the lack of a dress code for Government employed teachers. Unfortunately, it seems that some teachers do not understand what is acceptable for them to wear as role models to their students. Being an older employee, I have always worn a collar and tie, unless it is a day on which more suitable dress is required egs. Athletics, Swimming Sports etc. This year already I have had to suggest to female teachers that I don't believe singlet tops and thongs are professional dress. To males I have had to suggest that beach shorts, sandals and collarless t-shirts are not professional dress. Hence I am pleased that our employer is to address Dress Codes at this time. I encourage them to establish a dress code for teachers.

I strongly support the wearing of school uniforms. Although not compulsory at our school, almost every child wears the attractive uniform on a daily basis. This assists parents as there are no arguments at home about what is to be worn by the child to school each day. It also eliminates competition and the modern day need to wear designer clothing and footwear. I urge the Department of Education to mandate uniforms in all schools.

At our school the uniform is sold solely by volunteer parents at minimum cost. As it returns a profit, it raises funds for our school. As well our parents re-sell second hand items which are donated or sold on consignment. It would be helpful if there were more consistency between schools. Recently, I visited India, where I found that all Government School Students wore identical uniforms, irrespective of the school's location. I don't believe it would be easy to achieve this in Victoria!

In Primary schools most children like to conform and the wearing of the uniform helps them to feel accepted and that they belong. I realise that in secondary schools this may not be the case and that sanctions may be necessary.

With greater consistency throughout the State, maybe the need for sanctions would be reduced.

I thank you for the opportunity to place my views before the inquiry.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John W Gow".

John W Gow

