



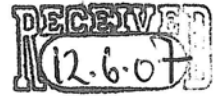
SIKH INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF VICTORIA Inc



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Parliamentary Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools.

The Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria Inc. (SICV) wishes to make a submission as part of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victoria

SICV is an incorporated organization with a vision to create greater awareness and understanding of Sikhs and Sikhism in the Australian Community. SICV promotes and works for dialogue, respect and understanding among all religions. Its Objectives include:

- Share information about the Sikh faith with the Australian Community
- Make representation on matters affecting the Sikh faith.
- Contribute Sikh perspectives to issues of common human concern
- Promote a culture of peace and harmony within multicultural Australia.

SICV believes that having a common school uniform is important in promoting school identity and integration. However it is also important to recognize that there is no hindrance to the practice of various cultures and faiths. Students should be able to wear their significant religious symbols and articles of faith: such as the Christian crosses, hijabs (Muslim scarves), yarmulka (Jewish caps) or Sikh turbans/patkas, steel bangles, and for a small minority of initiated Sikhs the kirpan, etc. These items have intrinsic and spiritual value to the wearer.

As an illustration we make reference to South East Asian countries e.g. Singapore and Malaysian Schools dress code models. Almost all secular schools in Singapore and Malaysia have adopted the western attire for school uniforms. These include the shirt and trousers/pants for boys and blouse and pinafore and skirt for girls. Each school chooses its own design and colours etc. But to accommodate their religious beliefs there is flexibility and children in addition are permitted to wear where applicable their own religious symbols and religious articles of faith for example a Sikh boy will wear his school uniform and may wear his patka/turban, and steel bracelet.

The State of Victoria can adopt this model without detriment of infringing upon the cultural expression or basic religious human rights. This flexibility has the advantage of enabling the cross-cultural education within the School Community- the students, teachers, parents, and School Councils. It will undoubtedly promote tolerance and understanding and help build a harmonious society.