

Mr Geoff Howard MP
Chair
Education and Training Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
East Melbourne 3002

1st May 2007

Dear Mr Howard

Re: Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniform in Victorian Schools

This submission has been prepared by the Spensley Street Primary School Parent Association. The Parent Association strongly supports the view that School Councils should determine school policy on dress codes and uniforms and is concerned that any move to remove the rights of School Councils would:

- undermine good governance in schools
- create an unnecessary administrative burden as schools try to police these mandatory requirements
- create a financial burden for some families

Overall, student uniforms do not contribute to student learning and as such, should not require government intervention.

At our school, dress code guidelines have been widely debated by the school council, staff and parents and successfully implemented over many years. The Student Dress Code sets out certain standards for the school community, whilst promoting a sense of individual and, when required, collective identity and pride. Consideration is given to health and safety requirements, freedom of expression, respecting cultural diversity and financial constraints. For example, students must wear suitable hats when outdoors in Terms 1 and 4. Also footwear should provide adequate protection for children's feet, thus thongs and high heels are not permitted. The Student Dress Code was reviewed in 2005 and overwhelmingly re-endorsed.

Thank you for considering our submission. I have attached a copy of our Student Dress Code.

Yours sincerely,

Orania Tokatlidis
Chair, Parent Association
Spensley Street Primary School