

21 May 2007

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

**Submission from St Kilda Park Primary School in response to
Government Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools**

St Kilda Park Primary School has a well established and broadly embraced set of core values that guide decision-making and underpin all school policies and practices. These values of Optimism, Integrity, Enthusiasm for Learning and Teaching, Tolerance and Empathy, Creativity, Resilience and Individualism, and Egalitarianism and Inclusiveness are reflected in all aspects of school life and contribute to a sense of common purpose within the school community. The long standing policy of casual dress for students is intrinsic to these values and the philosophy of the school and community.

The school's policy where students chose what they wear is fundamental to a community life based on mutual respect and that embraces diversity and individualism, where there is a focus on building self esteem and social skills which enable children to be themselves and also be able to work and play happily within the school community.

The long standing policy regarding student dress is based on common sense and safety and is encompassing of health promotion policies regarding sun protection. Guidelines are simple; students are required to wear shoes with covered toes and clothes that cover their shoulders. The wearing of hats to and from school and in the playground is consistent with Education Department policy. Guidelines beyond this have not been required as all students dress in a manner appropriate for school and for the range of activities they undertake. They dress in the same way as they do on weekends and after school, in a way which allows them to feel comfortable both physically and within the group. The policy of casual clothing goes a long way to allowing the school to be considered as a real part of the broader community. Dress code is not an issue, the students dress appropriately without competition

Like all school policies, the policy of casual student dress is considered on regular basis through discussion at school council, staff meetings and parent and student forums. Comment is also invited through the school newsletter. The policy has always been wholeheartedly endorsed.