



TAYLORS LAKES
SECONDARY COLLEGE
Learn and Achieve Together

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Taylors Lakes Secondary College – Response to Government Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools

Background Information

The College has had a uniform policy since its inception in 1992. In developing the values and goals in its inaugural years the college community identified as one of its values the “right for all students to be treated as equals”. From this value a range of goals and policies were developed with the student uniform policy being one.

Throughout 1992 a College Council Sub Committee was established which included representatives across all stake holders in the college community. (Parents, Students and staff). The outcome was the development of an agreed student dress code which was achieved by the implementation of a college uniform.

The College Student Management team were responsible for the development of the processes required to ensure that the policing of the uniform policy was complied by students and parents.

Over the proceeding 12 years no review of the uniform policy was undertaken. The only exception being, the introduction of a Year 12 windcheater resulting from a request from the senior student body.

The view of the school community about school uniform The benefits and costs of mandatory school uniform

In 2005 it was felt that many variations had unofficially been introduced into the student dress code. This caused frustration amongst staff that are responsible for the policing of student uniform, and confusion amongst parents and students in relation to approved uniform items.

The College Council decided to address this by establishing a Uniform Review Sub Committee made up of Parents, Students and Staff. The brief of the Sub Committee was to address the following questions.

1 – Ascertain whether the College Community still valued the student uniform policy?

2 – The reasons why inconsistent uniform items were being worn by Students?

3 – To redesign items of the College uniform which contribute to non compliance and caused confusion?

The Process commenced with the College Community being surveyed to establish if the college uniform statement was still valued (see below). The data strongly indicated that the student uniform was still required, and that the reasons outlined in the policy statement were equally valued. The data also indicated that the cost of uniform was not an overwhelming issue, and in fact cost of dressing students in non uniform items would be more expensive and detract from the established values.

TAYLORS LAKES SECONDARY COLLEGE UNIFORM

STATEMENT

It is the policy of Taylors Lakes Secondary College to have all students wear the approved school uniform. A uniform promotes a positive image of the college amongst the community. It facilitates the quick and easy identification of our students. It allows students to develop a sense of pride and belonging.

By having a compulsory uniform the college aims to:

- * promote equality amongst our student community*
- * distinguish our college from other school communities*
- * foster pride and develop an empathy with our college*
- * provide protection to all our students by quick and easy identification of our students as distinct from other members of other school communities or outsiders.*

The Sub Committee addressed the second and third questions of the brief by once again surveying the College Community on why there were inconsistencies in the uniform. This resulted in addressing some design issues and incorporating the newly redeveloped College logo and motto on many uniform items.

The Sub Committees findings and recommendations were subsequently presented and ratified by the college Council. The College Community were notified of the reviews outcomes and a timeline incorporating 2006 and 2007 was established to allow the transition of uniform items to take place.

- **Appropriate enforcement, sanctions and exemptions.**

The College's Student Management Team were asked to review and clarify practices and processes related to the policing of students uniform. The following steps summaries the practices the college undertakes.

- All students and parents sign a uniform compliance statement on enrolment.

- Students who wear non compliance uniform items are asked to have written permission from their parents/ guardians explaining the reason and indicating the length of time before the student is in full uniform.
 - Sanctions for non compliance by a student is a college issued detention, and parent contact if the dress code is continually breached.
 - College policy allows for exemptions for items such as alternative shoes should a medical condition be documented.
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- **Practical Uniform Procurement Arrangements**

The college has a contractual arrangement in relation to the supply and sale of the college uniform. In 2007 the college employed the services of a new uniform contractor. This was partly due to the college community requesting an improvement in the service and availability. This has resulted in a retail service being offered both at the college twice per week and at the suppliers retail address.

Feedback from the college community of uniform review / upgrade process over the last two years has clearly indicated an increased level of compliance and support from all sections.

Gus Napoli

Assistant Principal

Uniform Review Chairperson.