

Wangaratta High School

Response to memo S159-2007

"Government inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools".

Response to main points :

- **Benefits of mandatory School Uniforms & Dress Code**

1. Identity - pride in school membership, belonging to a team.
2. Community identity – 'our school', 'our students'.
3. Culture – part of school's history.
4. Values – pride in presentation, being 'well turned out'.
5. Warm, 'Sunsmart' compliant, safe.
6. 'Fashion' items, both clothing & jewellery etc, taken out of school arena. No 'must have' peer-pressure.
7. Equality – disguises 'parent income' factor as everyone dresses the same. Less opportunity for bullying based on 'visual difference'.
8. Less parent/child friction over 'what to wear'.

RECOMENDATION: That DoE support schools in establishing uniform as prerequisite of enrolment and attendance.

- **Costs of mandatory School Uniforms**

1. Less expensive than fashion driven clothing
2. Economies of scale of bulk buying by sole supplier
3. Benefits to school through local business partnership with supplier
4. Less clothes needed – no perceived problem of 'repetition' of outfits.

RECOMENDATION: That the Government support financially the State School Relief Fund to support families in financial hardship.

- **Uniform procurement**

1. Sole supplier through tender is most cost efficient and practical
2. On site access through uniform shop, on school campus open at lunchtimes
3. Partnership with welfare arm of school
4. Students feel 'ownership' via collective decisions re. 'Year specific' clothing

RECOMENDATION: That uniform procurement remains responsibility of each School Council.

- **Antidiscrimination**

1. Case-by-case exemption considered on merit – only exceptions are on health grounds or for religious observance.

RECOMENDATION: That school uniform and dress codes remain flexible enough to cater for cultural and religious differences, at the discretion of the school.

- **Health promotion**

1. 'Sunsmart' protection factor of fabric being min. 15+ SPF.
2. Safety – shoes and other 'safe' options appropriate to school environment.

- **Enforcement and sanctions**

1. as per school uniform policy – non-negotiable.

RECOMENDATION : That a condition on school enrolment be adherence to the school uniform policy and dress code, and Wangaratta High School be unreservedly supported in the implementation of the school's policy by Hume Regional Office, Central Office of DoE and the Government.

- **Community driven**

1. Supported by School Council as representatives of local community.

RECOMENDATION: That school uniform and dress code policy remain responsibility of each School Council.

- **Staff Dress Code**

RECOMMENDATION : that the Principal, through the School Council, has the responsibility of establishing and ensuring an appropriate dress code for all school staff.



Rex Pirie

Assistant Principal

on behalf on the School Council of Wangaratta High School

5 June 2007