



Uniforms in Schools

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July 2008

UNIFORM POLICY / CODE OF DRESS

- National Guidelines would be most useful in assisting schools develop policies in relation to uniforms and code of dress.
- Each Board of Management should have individual discretion in relation to the content and implementation of the schools individual policy.
- A Uniform Policy should be specific in relation to the exact items of clothing acceptable as part of a standard school uniform. The policy should state explicitly where the uniform can be purchased, the approximate cost of each component of the uniform, a description of the individual items of clothing permissible as part of the uniform and a ruling on what clothing/accessories are NOT permitted as part of the uniform.
- This policy procedure enables the school maintain control and avoid variations in uniforms. If schools have an individual crest, many outlet stores can act as school supplier and source these 'crested' uniforms without the additional cost being exorbitant.
- It is recommended that the Policy should also include a statement such as 'no other garments or accessories other than raincoats can be worn with the uniform....' This clause enables the Board of Management of the school, if it so wishes, to prevent the wearing of a hijab or other symbolic clothing. This policy statement would also be most useful in excluding the wearing of jewellery and other religious symbols, medals, scapulars etc. The imposition of a blanket ban on accessories reduces the risk of the school being exposed to accusations of religious discrimination in the future. Above all, a Board must be seen to be equal in its treatment of all religions.
- A Policy should also contain a clause that prohibits the concealment of facial features or restricts ease of movement on health and safety grounds. A policy should also attempt to be as gender neutral as possible.
- Children should not be given the option of opting in or out of the schools Uniform Policy.
- It might also be useful to alert Boards to the possibility of considering the need for a Code of Dress Policy for staff in the event of teachers wearing inappropriate or revealing clothing or staff from minority religions wishing to wear symbolic clothing in the course of their daily work