



WINMALEE HIGH SCHOOL

Uniform at Winmalee High School

It has been agreed that Winmalee High School is a uniform school. As such students enrolling in the school, agree to abide by the dress code. In choosing to enrol at the school, students do so knowing that they are expected to wear the full and correct uniform. Likewise, parents and carers are expected to provide a uniform for their child to wear every day and are asked to support the wearing of the correct uniform.

WHY WEAR UNIFORM?

The School Community agrees that there are a number of benefits from the wearing of school uniform. It:

- defines an identity for the school within its community – it makes us readily identifiable in the community on trains, walking along the street or alighting from buses.
- develops students' sense of belonging to the school community – it builds a connection with others through the wearing of uniform.
- provides an opportunity to build school spirit – we are proud of our school and show this through the wearing of the uniform.
- enhances the health and safety of students when involved in school activities – students are less likely to incur injury as the shoes are safe and appropriate for Science lessons for example; while students doing bushwalking for example would be readily identified.
- promotes a sense of inclusiveness, non-discrimination and equal opportunity – students are not made to feel different as all students wear the same clothing.
- reinforces the perception of the school as an ordered and safe environment – gives uniformity.
- increases the personal safety of students and staff by allowing easier recognition of visitors and potential intruders in the school. The school does not have fencing preventing entry and we rely on quick means of identification.
- promotes positive community perceptions of public education – a dress code ensures a dress standard and directly reflects an image of the school. Many believe it also gives an impression that high expectations extend to other areas of the school.
- makes school clothing more affordable for families by reducing or eliminating the risk of peer pressure to wear the current fashion or trend and expensive 'label' clothing.

EXCURSIONS AND THE WEARING OF UNIFORM

Our policy is that full school uniform must be worn for all excursions unless the students are informed otherwise through the excursion note. Students not in uniform will be prevented from attending the excursion as they are representing the school and their appearance directly reflects the image of our school. Alternative activities would need to be provided. The uniform guidelines support this action in relation to exclusion from certain educational activities as it states that, "Such action (i.e. exclusion) may also be required if a student's clothing compromises agreed upon community standards articulated in the uniform requirements, and might be considered damaging to the image of the school in the larger community context", (Page 10, paragraph 3 of DEC Uniform Policy).

MANAGING THE WEARING OF THE SCHOOL UNIFORM

One of the concerns expressed earlier in the year was the discipline attached to the uniform policy. It is important that parents and carers understand that parents do have a role in determining uniform policy but that the enforcement of the policy is the responsibility of the school. As with any school rule there are rewards for following school rules and consequences for not following school rules. Staff agree upon the best way to manage the non-wearing of uniform and a common procedure has been developed to manage uniform matters. The majority of our staff do have a strong welfare focus and understand that there may be many reasons a student cannot meet the uniform requirements. They are getting increasingly better at having conversations that encourage the wearing of the correct uniform.

One of the most basic steps teachers including Deputy Principals take when seeing a student out of uniform is to establish whether the non-wearing of the uniform is a welfare based issue or a discipline matter. The simplest way to determine this is through a conversation with the student about what is preventing or stopping them from wearing the uniform. Do you have a uniform at home that you can wear? Is there a reason you can't wear the uniform? These types of questions quickly give us a feel for whether the student has other welfare issues impacting on their ability to come in the uniform. Others are clearly discipline matters for example, if the student says that they just don't want to wear an aspect of the uniform e.g. choosing not to wear the school jumper. The student is making a choice to not follow the school's dress code or uniform code. As such, it then becomes a discipline matter for not following school rules. Hopefully, the review of the school uniform by the P&C subcommittee will help address some of the reasons students don't want to wear the school uniform and the concerns of parents.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE WEARING OF SCHOOL UNIFORM

A range of strategies are used to encourage the wearing of the school uniform. They include:

- Support for students and families of students with welfare based issues through second hand clothing from our clothing pool which provides low cost or no cost uniform.
- A uniform exchange service also exists where a jumper is provided for the day.
- Families are made aware that they can access financial support through the student assistance scheme.
- Families who apply for short term exemption due to hardship can be provided with additional time to acquire the full school uniform. This occurred, for example, in Term 1 this year to enable parent's time to work toward buying the correct shoes.

RECOGNITION AND REWARDING THE WEARING OF UNIFORM

Acknowledgement of the importance of the uniform as a school expectation and dress code occurs through the recognition and rewards program in the school. Each term students in roll call are selected and awarded a merit award for consistently wearing uniform. Reference is made to groups of students, especially year groups who all wear the uniform. For example, some classes within year groups had a competition over a period of time to see which class was in uniform the most. The good news was that all classes ended up winning as all students in all classes were consistently in uniform. Our SRC students also model the wearing of the correct school uniform every day and on every weekly assembly. Our deputy principals and year advisers regularly encourage wearing the correct uniform and make reference is to workplace requirements and the dress codes in workplaces. The school makes its best effort to apply these consistently.