Important Facts about School Uniforms

School uniforms require students to wear a particular set of clothes throughout the week. These uniforms generally consist of slacks, a belt and a polo shirt with or without the school’s emblem. They might also include skirts for girls and long-sleeved shirts for colder seasons.

School uniforms are a highly debated topic among students, parents and educators. The implementation of a school dress code can be an important factor in parents’ and students’ decisions of whether or not to enroll. There are several valid pros and cons of school uniforms. The basic premise behind school uniforms is that they create equality among students and help to prevent conflict. Opponents of school uniforms, however, see uniforms as diminishing individuality.

Convenient

- With a predetermined uniform, and without the chore of selecting clothes every morning for school, students will be out of the house faster. Having school uniforms on weekdays may also make students excited to prepare outfits for the weekends. Wearing a uniform helps prepare students for summer jobs that require them to wear uniforms. The function of uniforms is also convenient for parents, as they don’t have to spend a fortune constantly updating their children’s wardrobes.
Equality
- One argument made by advocates of school uniforms is that having students dress alike minimizes conflicts based on economic differences. When students all dress in uniform, there can be no conspicuous consumption of designer products. Visible socio-economic differences are minimized by school uniforms. Advocates also argue that visual equality leads to fewer gang and clique conflicts because members can’t wear their group’s colors or symbols.

Safety
- Advocates of school uniforms say that having students dress alike makes it easier for educators to keep the school safe. Since the student body is dressed in uniforms, outsiders wearing their own clothes are more visible. Identifying potentially threatening outsiders or interlopers becomes easier.

Status and Bullying
- Though students intent on bullying will find anything to tease someone about (weight, complexion, friends), many schools hope that implementing a school uniform will reduce competition and some forms of bullying. Since all students wear the same basic clothes, no one is judged by social or financial status based on appearance.

Field Trips
- The use of uniforms for students is convenient for teachers when taking students on field or school trips. Having a school uniform makes the students easily identifiable to their teachers, reducing the risk that a student will be lost or left behind.

Modesty
- Uniforms prevent the immodest dress found among some teenagers, such as clothes that bare too much skin, have curse words or vulgar expressions on them, or associate them with gangs. Since all the uniforms are the same, students may take their studies more seriously and be less distracted by fads and fashion while on school grounds.

Cons for Students
- Although there are many pros to wearing school uniforms, many students feel suffocated by the lack of individuality they are allowed to express in their appearance. School uniforms can often be unflattering, especially when schools have rules that require tucked-in shirts. Students who are uncomfortable with their bodies may have issues with the uniform designs. Many students also find uniforms inconvenient for participating in sporting activities during school hours.

Loss of Individuality
- Those opposed to school uniforms often cite the loss of individuality as a key problem of school uniforms. When wearing a uniform, the student loses the ability to visually express individual identity through clothing. This may hinder the student’s development of individual identity and make him feel he has lost a certain measure of choice and freedom.

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