



Kariong Mountains High School Uniform Report May 2019

School uniform is very often an issue which can bring a community together or have a divisive effect, depending on the viewpoints held. Our current school uniform is the result of the time and effort put in by our foundation P&C, when they determined that Kariong Mountains High School would be designated as a uniform wearing school.

Many decisions have to be made when a new school starts up. Obviously, the design of the uniform can create much interest and dissension. KMHS was no different. The foundation uniform committee spent many hours and evenings investigating fabrics, styles and colours. We are forever grateful for the time put into all these early decisions.

This report addresses the issues/queries that are heard most often about our uniform. It is not the starting point for a uniform change or advocating for a change. It is about providing information. Schools can change their uniform, but generally not after just 10 years and it involves considerable consultation and years of transition before that occurs.

It is evident that we do not have 100% support for wearing of the uniform day by day (a different picture arises in the case of excursions requiring full uniform), with jackets/hoodie jumpers and leggings being the biggest issues for non-compliance. My concern, is that the types of issues arising are more to do with disinterest and therefore would not be resolved by an all-out change of uniform.

Dissecting the Uniform into its parts, a then and now perspective...

Everyday Shirt

Discussions about polo shirts vs cotton/polyester shirts were discussed in detail and it was decided that a smart looking shirt much better reflected the pride in having this school in our community. Additionally, it was a point of difference between primary and high school. A change in quality occurred in the early years, as a result of concerns raised around the wearability of the fabric.

Skirts and shorts option

Girls have always been able to decide between wearing the school skirt or school shorts. This is acceptable even when 'full uniform' is required for excursions etc.

Boys Shorts

There have been no issues with the navy blue options provided. (FYI – long cargo shorts were once on the table – providing evidence as to why uniform can't be designed for the fashion trend of the day!). Boys tend to wear these for both everyday use and sport.

Sports Shirt

Considered to be smart looking, but not necessarily the most 'breathable' of materials. Favoured very much as an everyday option. This would not take away, however, from the need to change for sport.

Sports Shorts – Issues tend to be with the girls' options

Issues have been discussed around the 'give' in these, mainly with girls. After investigation it was determined that an alternative should be designed and this is now available on an order first, rather than in stock model. I think that over time, this will change, but not in the near future and the other everyday

shorts style is still available. This alternative does away with the need to wear inappropriate non-school uniform shorts.

Jackets

This is the area in which we get the most non-compliance, despite the fact that there are 2 alternatives for the cooler weather – the fleecy lined ‘bomber’ style jacket and the all-weather style jacket. Whilst the Facebook responses refer to hoodies, they are by far not a contentious issue from the analysis.

Wearing a ‘hoodie’ at school is not acceptable. It makes identification difficult and does not portray a good image. Although some schools have the hooded style jacket in their uniform code, I could not find evidence of wearing the hoodie as part of that code. When comments related to warmth have been raised, I have also noted that the small percentage of students trying to get away with wearing the ‘hoodie’ do so in all weather conditions (so not just a cold weather response) and are sometimes wearing jackets that are less fleecy than our school jacket (so again, it’s not always about being cold). It seems to be more about just not wearing the school uniform.

Long Pants

Boys and Girls have a smart pair of pants as an option for colder weather. There is also the track pants, made of the same material and of the same style as the all-weather jacket. Trackpants were discussed in the original uniform design, but the ‘tracksuit’ material style was considered to wear poorly. Again, we have to be careful of just catering for the style of one moment in time e.g. flared, straight legged, fitted and ensure that any pants option will be suitable for many years and suitable for many body types.

Shoes/socks and tights/stockings

Shoes must be black and leather to meet WHS standards. Socks are white and ankle length. Stockings and tights are acceptable in the cooler months.

On-going queries/contentious issues:

- Changing into sports uniform. We think that this is a good health habit. People do not go to the gym in their lunch breaks and not change back into work clothes? Why should it be different for students?
- Option to wear sports shirt at anytime
- Wearing school jacket
- Length of school skirt
- Care issues of shirt vs polo
- Long pants options
- School processes for students non-compliant with uniform

Wonders and What ifs arising from this report:

- Overall, the uniform stays as is and we continue to challenge issues of non-compliance
- ‘Sporty Wednesday’- sports uniform may be worn all day as there is a ‘different’ organisation for this day. Lunch time activities to run to support healthy lifestyle on this day.
- CHS representative jackets to be acceptable, as a recognition of achievement, in the Year for which they are current.
- A one-off 10 year anniversary designed jacket (similar to the Year 12 jackets) to be available for students to purchase Semester 1, 2020.
- The addition of a fleecy lined track pants style, but already suggestions that if not considered ‘fashionable’ won’t be worn
- A summer and winter uniform to accommodate the humidity of Term 1.
- We road test the new sports shorts to see if they are successful or if students are just non-compliant
- Continue to have consequences for non-compliance with uniform