

School Uniforms – Good or Bad?

Ever since they were introduced in Victorian times, school uniforms have been a contentious subject. In this discussion text I will look at both sides of the argument – why some teachers love them, and why most kids don't.

Supporters of school uniform argue that fashionable clothes, and arguing about whose clothes are nicer, can distract children from their schoolwork. In addition, they say that school uniform makes everyone look the same, whereas if you let children wear their own clothes it would be obvious whose parents had lots of money and whose did not. The poorer children might get bullied, they claim. Furthermore, the more fashion-conscious children might not want to risk getting their own clothes dirty or torn, so they might not want to do activities such as art.

Many teachers feel that school uniform is good for discipline and makes the children feel part of the school. They maintain that on school trips, it is easier to check all the children are present if they are wearing school uniform. What's more, some adult jobs (e.g. flight attendants, nurses or policemen) involve wearing a uniform, so children might as well get used to it early. Finally, school uniform makes life easier for busy parents because they know exactly what their child is going to wear each day, and they know they're not going to get into any argument about whether a certain garment is suitable to wear to school!

Critics of school uniform argue that making children wear exactly the same clothes stifles their individuality and creativity. In some countries, like France and America, school uniform is almost unheard of. Most adults do not have to wear a uniform to work and would be horrified if their bosses suggested it, so why should children have to wear one to school? Furthermore, some schools insist that uniforms are bought from a certain shop, and this can be expensive. Poorer children would have to buy their uniforms second-hand which could embarrass them. Moreover, the style of school uniform does not suit everyone. I was a chubby child and looked atrocious in the white shirt, bottle-green jumper and black skirt my school insisted I wear. Maybe I would have been more self-confident in my own clothes?

There are yet more problems with school uniform. Everyone wearing the same clothes can lead to lots of lost property because there might be five blue fleeces left in the playground and nobody knows who they belong to. Children would recognise their own clothes much more easily. What's more, children don't argue over clothes on non-uniform days, so why would they tease each other if they wore their own clothes all the time? Finally, the point about children wearing school uniform so they can be spotted easily on school trips isn't true because children often wear their own clothes on outings.

In conclusion, there are advantages and disadvantages about wearing uniform AND wearing ordinary clothes to school. On balance, although I hated wearing school uniform myself, I think there are probably more arguments in favour of school uniform. They do stop arguments in the playground, they do make life easier for busy parents, but most of all they let children get on with being children because they're not worried about messing their nice clothes up.