

Why Kids Should Wear School Uniforms

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The debate rages on in school and in homes. Should American students have to wear school uniforms? What are the pros to school uniforms in public schools? First, let's explore the most common pros for school uniforms.

1. The Uniform in Uniformity

Educators and experts who are pro school uniforms believe that uniforms contribute positively to students' behavior. They believe that when students wear uniforms, they feel more professional and behave accordingly. Many educators believe that students can become distracted by fashion trends and status symbol clothing. Therefore, when all students are dressed in regulation uniforms, there is less focus on fashion in the classroom and more focus on learning.

2. Easier Mornings for Parents

When there's no debate on what a student is allowed wear to school, then that makes mornings easier for parents and for kids. Everyone knows exactly what the kids need to wear, their regulated school uniform. This can lead to a decrease in morning arguments.

3. Dress Code Control

Schools without a school uniform policy still have rules on what clothing is and is not allowed in school. There are usually rules regarding modesty issues, visible logos, offensive text on clothing, gang colors and symbols and more. Teachers and administrative staff must monitor the students' attire. This is of course avoided when all students are in uniform.

4. An Even Playing Field

One of the most obvious arguments for school uniforms is that by having all children dressed the same, there is a decrease in bullying and teasing. In this era of status brands and high-fashion trends, clothing has become the definitive status symbol for children and teens. By evening the playing field with uniforms, there is less opportunity for children to be picked on or shunned for their clothes.

5. School Spirit

Many experts believe that when the entire student body is dressed in uniforms, they develop a stronger team mentality. When they are all dressed alike, their all-for-one-and-one-for-all comradery is boosted.

6. Simple Economics

Buying a few school uniforms instead of a new school wardrobe every fall is much more economical. School uniforms are designed to stand up to everyday wear and repeated washing so most parents find that they can get away with buying a few sets.

7. Weekend Style

With all the money a parent saves by not having to buy day to day clothes, they can (if they so choose) let their children buy a few nicer and more fashionable pieces for weekends and evenings. Wearing a uniform five days a week might make students appreciate their weekend fashions more--maybe enough to even take good care of them!

Now let's look at some of the cons against school uniforms.

1. Limited Self Expression

The most common argument against school uniforms is that they limit personal expression. Kids and teens use the way they dress to express themselves and to identify with certain social groups. Many students who are against school uniforms argue that they lose their self identity when they lose their right to express themselves through fashion.

2. The Initial Cost

Though many argue that in the end, school uniforms are a cheaper option to buying a school wardrobe, there is an argument that it is costly to buy several uniforms at once. Also, many schools have several uniforms such as everyday uniforms, formal uniforms for special occasions and yet another uniform for P.E. Many parents argue that buying all these uniforms for all their kids every fall is hard on the family budget.

3. Comfort Factor

Kids are very specific about what they are comfortable wearing. Some kids are sensitive to certain materials while others are opposed to buttons, zippers and restrictive clothing. Some children are also uncomfortable wearing certain styles of clothing. Many girls, for example, do not like to wear skirts or dresses, which most girls' uniforms require. No uniform can suit all children.

4. Requires Some Organization

This one is personal; as a rather unorganized mom, I admit that sometimes it's hard to know exactly what uniform parts need to be washed, dried, and ironed the night before. I have spent many a morning scrambling to find a tie or a blazer that was required for an event.

5. If It Isn't Broke...

"Why bother?" is possibly the most common argument against school uniforms. Many educators and parents just don't see the point in switching over to uniforms, especially in American public schools where uniforms are still the exception and not the rule.