

The School Uniform Question

1 Individualism is a **fundamental** part of society in many countries. Most people believe in the right to express their own opinion without fear of punishment. This value, however, is coming under fire in an unlikely place—the **public school** classroom. The issue is school uniforms. Should public school students be allowed to make individual decisions about clothing, or should all students be required to wear a uniform? School uniforms are the better choice for three reasons.

2 First, wearing school uniforms would help make students' lives simpler. They would no longer have to decide what to wear every morning, sometimes trying on outfit after outfit in an effort to choose. Uniforms would not only save time but also would eliminate the stress often associated with this chore.

3 Second, school uniforms influence students to act responsibly in groups and as individuals. Uniforms give students the message that school is a special place for learning. In addition, uniforms create a feeling of unity among students. For example, when students do something as a group, such as attend meetings in the auditorium or eat lunch in the cafeteria, the fact that they all wear the same uniform gives them a sense of community. Even more important, statistics show the positive effects that school uniforms have on violence and **truancy**. According to a recent survey in a large school district in Florida, incidents of school violence dropped by 50 percent, attendance and test scores improved, and student suspensions declined approximately 30 percent after school uniforms were introduced.

4 Finally, school uniforms would help make all the students feel equal. Students' standards of living differ greatly from family to family, and some people are **well-off** while others are not. People sometimes forget that school is a place to get an education, not to promote a "fashion show." **Implementing** mandatory school uniforms would make all the students look the same regardless of their financial status. School uniforms would promote pride and help to raise the self-esteem of students who cannot afford to wear expensive clothing.

5 Opponents of mandatory uniforms say that students who wear school uniforms cannot express their individuality. This point has some *merit on the surface*. However, as stated previously, school is a place to learn, not to **flaunt** wealth and fashion. Society must decide if individual expression through clothing is more valuable than improved educational performance. It is important to remember that school uniforms would be worn only during school hours. Students can express their individuality in the way that they dress outside of the classroom.

6 In conclusion, there are many well-documented benefits of implementing mandatory school uniforms for students. Studies show that students learn better and act more responsibly when they wear uniforms. Public schools should require uniforms in order to benefit both the students and society as a whole.

a **fundamental**:
essential, basic

a **public school**: a
school run by the
state government
and paid for by taxes

truancy: absence
without permission

well-off: wealthy

to implement: to put
into effect

to flaunt: to show off,
display