SCHOOL UNIFORM QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you to everyone who returned a questionnaire. 119 forms were sent out, and 56 (47%) were returned. Of those who returned forms:

- 31 (55%) were in favour
- 14 (25%) were against
- 8 (15%) had no strong views either way
- 3 (5%) were only in favour if the majority of pupils were in favour.

11 (20%) of parents thought a uniform should be for primary only. However, many parents who said they were against a uniform did not actually fill in the rest of the form, so it is hard to judge their views on this matter.

39 (70%) of parents were in favour of some sort of dress code, if there was no uniform.

12 (24%) were against a dress code (mainly those who were opposed to a uniform).

The rest did not express a view.

A variety of comments were returned, expressing a huge range of views, some obviously very strongly held. Despite the fact that a majority of returns were in favour of a uniform, a large proportion of the comments came from parents opposed to the idea. The comments returned appear below. An attempt has been made to amend any sections that could identify the authors. They show quite clearly how impossible it is to please everybody!

“I think uniforms would be a fantastic idea. The younger children would look so much smarter. Designer labels are not suitable for a school setting, and the children who cannot afford them can be made to feel “poor”. Definitely a good idea.”

“We are 100% behind the implementation of a full school uniform.”

“My daughter looks very smart in her school uniform”

“My daughter loves her school jacket and would wear it to bed. I send her to school in uniform now! Clothes the colours of her jacket, no arguments about what to wear, easily laundered, and cheap to buy.”

“I think school uniform gives more sense of belonging and pride in the school.”

“It's a good idea for primary especially.”

“Reasons for not wanting a uniform

1) Each pupil is an individual and there are other ways of promoting “belonging/pride” in the school etc”

2) Concerns over amount of staff time/resources used in enforcing a school uniform. If parents are not in favour, what are the sanctions available? Presumably you would not want to exclude a child for not wearing uniform?

3) Cost. My child has been known to have clothes that fit one day and not fit a month later. This is bad enough with ordinary clothing without duplicating the problem.”
4) Arguments over “well off” and “not so well off” distinctions through clothing will not be addressed unless you have a school uniform for all activities including eg PE. Again an added cost.

5) Twice as much washing, and more importantly drying! Children will not want to wear school uniform outside school hours, so there will be more clothes changes each day.

6) As soon as it is compulsory to wear a uniform, it will become disliked. Children will immediately start to find ways of “customising” uniform to make themselves look different.

7) Pupils with only one or two years left should be excluded. They are growing very quickly at that age.

8) Children are not clones—uniforms have a place (perhaps!) when several different schools are in close proximity. But in Mid Yell there is no other school for miles! Most people know who exactly children are, what school they go to, and their family circumstances.”

“I think it will be costly for families, and more hassle to make sure uniform items are clean and dry to wear.”

“School jackets already exist and they are optional. That's fine, and I hope that if a majority of parents opt for a uniform, then that will be optional too.”

-“Re Pupil Council—slight concern that it will be only the confident pupils who are heard—quiet ones may have views but may not be heard.
-Re type of clothing.....the few children who currently wear the school jacket (doesn't seem to be that many) could be an indicator of what pupils think of wearing a uniform. On that note—how many pupils come to school in the school sweatshirts?
-As you may have gathered, I'm not in favour of a school uniform (and it doesn't seem long since the last questionnaire). I would not insist on my children wearing it.”

“This question is raised from time to time and I feel that uniforms are gradually being imposed upon us by a MINORITY. I am surprised that it is “staff” that feel that a uniform helps them identify pupils. Are you sure it was staff from MYJHS who expressed this opinion? Or maybe we should just give up, and allow the one or two people who keep harping on about uniforms to dictate to the rest of us. In which case I hope they intend to pay for all my children's future uniforms.

I am also deeply concerned about this idea of needing to “belong” to the school. In the past it was a profound and unspoken truth that you identified with and were proud of your school, but it would have been very rude to comment on this—an implied criticism of other schools/places. As more of this “identity” rubbish creeps in, divisions in Yell are becoming a big problem.

“I have very strong views on this
If you have several children at school, they would need several outfits of clothes each
-i) This is quite a financial burden. Also
-ii) It is difficult enough to get clothes washed and dried in Winter as it is.”

Comments regarding current school jacket:
Most wanted to continue with it

“Re. Identification of MYJHS children on school trips—what is wrong with the optional jackets we have at present?”

“Yuk! Horrid cuffs and waistband!”

“They seem very popular—but see what the pupils think.”
Comments about suitable uniform:

“Nothing that needs ironing every morning!”

“Waterproof jacket with reflectors”

“These questions should only be asked IF and when we are to be dictated to as to how we dress our children”.

“I think the children should decide.”

“Please could we look at the school logo again and perhaps consider updating it?”

Comments about suitable footwear:

“High heels (for safety reasons) not allowed”

“No heels” (several made this comment)

“No trainers” / “leather shoes only” (several made this comment)

“just sensible”

“Nothing dangerous. But parents should make these arrangements!”

“Common sense!”

“Same basic colour-heels at a set height.”

“Black”

What should be included in a dress code?:

“No slogans, chains”

“I think similar to what exists already (via pupil council) but publicise code to parents”

“No jewellery, no crop tops, no low cut t-shirts or football shirts”

(And several similar comments).

“Why? If parents want their children to dress in a certain way, it is not really the school's place to overrule”

“Consideration of the purpose of school clothes and the possibility of stains/dirt etc.”

“Smart, with no inappropriate fashion trends. Eg bare midriff etc.”
Comments about: Should there be a uniform for primary and secondary?

“Sweatshirts for primary and jackets for secondary. Zip up fleeces could be introduced at a later date, as they are not very practical for wearing outdoors and they increase the initial cost of the uniform. I think primary should have a different uniform from the secondary department.”

“Seems unfair to enforce one and not the other eg in the case where one sibling “having” to wear it and the other not.
As far as I am aware, no other secondary department in Shetland has a uniform. Why oh why bring it to MYJHS?”

“If a uniform would have happened when our children were in Primary, back at the time of the petition, yes. I feel it is too late for our children. But good luck. I think it’s a good idea, for primary especially”

“Should be for Primary only initially at least. I don’t think it would work to introduce it at secondary level immediately.”

“The feeling I get talking to parents is that quite a few feel a uniform is a god idea, but they hesitate to support something their children would not like, especially those with secondary aged children.”