

# UNIFORMS AND CHRISTIAN SCHOOLING

April, 2008

We have been looking at the question of school uniforms very closely this year. The Board has spent a considerable amount of time looking at different aspects of the question. Shelly Johnson was asked to do an informal survey of teachers, and to look at any educational research literature pertaining to uniforms.

Input from parents was carefully solicited, and the surveys you recently did were carefully studied. The Board seemed to me determined to do a careful process, to listen diligently to the strongest arguments on both sides, and yet be very careful to protect the peace and unity of the school as a whole. You should know that various perspectives on uniforms were represented vigorously, even within the Board itself.

Some general conclusions as I would sum them up:

1. There is no clear Biblical case for or against uniforms per se. There are Biblical principles about being good stewards of our time and resources, avoiding the idols of materialism and licentiousness, and living together in peace and unity.
2. The results of Mrs. Johnson's research were about what you might expect--no real change in student performance could be documented when switching to uniforms, but teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the students did improve somewhat.
3. There should be a progression of increasing choice as students move from the Lower School to the Upper School. This fits with what we know about children developmentally, and with our Classical model as students move through the Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric stages.
4. In our context, care needs to be taken to not over-tax family resources. The simplest, true uniform, with the entire outfit bought from a single vendor, is probably not best for us.
5. Uniforms or a dress code in general, will not substitute for the hard work of raising and teaching children. That hard work, guided by the Holy Spirit, will always be done by parents, teachers, and other significant people in their lives. Uniforms or a dress code can help to save time and minimize certain distractions in the school environment (with which your teachers are asking for help). It can make children more identifiable, particularly at the younger ages, while on field trips and other outings, which can be helpful in terms of security.

New Dress Code for school year 2008-09:

The Board has instituted the following guidelines for the Lower School Dress Code for next year. Guidelines for the Upper School are still being worked on--at the Upper School, students are also being consulted more directly.

Lower School Dress Guidelines

Everyday Wear: Students (boys and girls) will wear white, light yellow, purple, or navy polo shirts (long or short sleeved). Boys may wear navy or khaki pants or walking shorts, and girls may wear navy or khaki pants, walking shorts, capris, skorts, skirts, or jumpers, and are to be of chino-style fabric. Shoes are to be dress shoes, flats, or athletic shoes that are closed-toed with a heel back. All of these items may be purchased from any vendor.

Chapel and Field Trips: Polo shirt with Trinity logo in white or purple from Lands' End, and khaki (not navy) pants, shorts, skorts, or skirts (from any vendor). The girls may also wear a khaki jumper (beginning with 2009-10, it would have to be the Lands' End jumper with the Trinity logo. Polos with the old logo are fine as long as they look presentable.)

Mrs. White will be distributing a more detailed version of the new dress code, and as I mentioned, we are still working on any possible revisions for the Upper School.

I personally commend the Board for their considered approach, and for showing me a prayer-filled process that produced a very good result.

Blessings on you and your family in Christ,

James Armistead,  
Headmaster



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