

# Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills submission of 21 June 2022

## PE1914/G: Ban school uniforms in secondary schools

Thank you for your further letter dated 30 May 2022 in relation to Petition PE1914, lodged by Matthew Lewis Simpson on 2 November 2021, which calls for school uniforms to be banned in secondary schools.

As your letter acknowledges, our consultation on school uniforms has now been launched on the Scottish Government's Consultation Hub and this consultation will remain open until Friday 14 October 2022. I will respond to each of the four points raised within your letter.

The purpose of this consultation is the preliminary step in the preparation of new policy and guidance and is being used to seek views from a range of stakeholders on the matters which are important to them about school uniform. It is intended that the responses to the consultation will be used to help us inform the scope and content of the guidance.

The consultation paper makes clear, as I have previously indicated, that it is not intended that school uniform will be abolished, nor that we mandate for specific school uniform items at a national level.

Children and young people were not explicitly engaged in the development of this consultation paper. However, the expressed views and concerns of young people via available research, have been considered, particularly in relation to PE, Physical Activity and Sport. In addition, we have made arrangements for there to be bespoke engagement with children and young people via children's and young people's organisations in order that their views can be heard and taken account of as part of this consultation process.

The issues to be explored from these sessions will include: whether or not children like school uniforms, (and the reasons why); what children see as the benefits, or drawbacks, of school uniforms; seeking their views on the cost of uniforms and how they impact on equality issues; and their views on arrangements to support uniform policy

implementation. The findings of this work will be incorporated into the report of the consultation analysis which will be made publicly available.

With regards to informing other about the existence of our consultation, my officials notified a wide range of stakeholders of this consultation's launch also informing them it would remain open for responses until 14 October 2022. Among the stakeholders directly notified included the Children's Parliament, YoungScot, the National Parents' Forum; the Children and Young People's Commissioner and the Child Poverty Action Group. My officials also notified education authorities, grant-aided and independent schools and school uniform suppliers. In addition, the launch of the consultation was also announced on the ScoGov Education twitter account and this has been reinforced by further activity on social media.

With regards to encouraging participants to submit their views to the consultation, whilst the period of consultation is ongoing between now and October, we will take further opportunities to highlight the consultation via social media in order to continue to generate responses.

Finally, with regards to receiving feedback about what will happen after our consultation closes, my officials will publish all responses received to our consultation (where respondents have given consent for their responses to be published) on the Scottish Government's consultation hub and they will also write and publish an analysis report summarising those responses. Further details about the development of the guidance document itself will be communicated publicly on our consultation hub after the consultation closes and the responses have been analysed. We would anticipate undertaking the work to develop national guidance in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders.

I hope that this information is helpful to the Committee's consideration of this petition.