Student Dress Code

Do Schools need to comply?

No, but schools are encouraged to establish a dress code for their students.

Conditions of compliance:

A dress code is a detailed written statement of the expectations that a school holds regarding student appearance. The code usually applies during school hours, while travelling to and from school, and when students are engaged in school activities out of school hours.

A dress code may require students to wear a school uniform and may define specifications for garment design and colour. Alternatively, a dress code may merely set out broad guidelines as to the appearance of students.

If you have to comply, what do you have to do?

A student dress code should ensure that all requirements enable both sexes to participate actively and safely in school life. The implications of equal opportunity legislation are such that schools may be required to publicly demonstrate that their policy is not unlawfully discriminatory.

With regard to a dress code, schools must be conscious of their obligations under the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA) which makes it unlawful for educational institutions or employers to treat students or employees unfavourably because of their appearance or dress and that appearance or dress is required or symbolic of their religious beliefs.

What are the consequences if you don’t comply?

You could be in breach of equal opportunity legislation.

See also:

Equal Opportunity and Antidiscrimination

Useful links:

Cancer Council SA - Sunsmart for primary schools
Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)