

Parent Petition dated 4 August 2022



Trinity Anglican College
Formal/PE Uniform Policy

Dear Principal Johnson,

Thank you for your time on Friday for initial discussions on this matter. Please find following and attached parent comments and signatures (as at today's date) by those requesting input and further consideration of this policy.

As parents of a student at Trinity Anglican College we are not satisfied with your decision regarding the formal/PE uniform change requirement. To our minds this policy negatively impacts our children in the following ways:

1. Reduced time in PE class doing physical activities (which is already very limited each fortnight in the new timetable). Parents are already dismayed at the reduced hours of physical activity for the kids at TAC given it is crucial for improving mental, emotional and physical health. Does TAC meet the NSW Education Department's mandatory minimum 150 minutes per week of outdoor moderate exercise?

NSW Education Department - Physical Activity and Sport Policy

"Students in Years K-10 are expected to participate in a minimum of 150 minutes of planned moderate with some vigorous physical activity across the school week."

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/pdhpe/physical-education/policy-in-practice>

We are aware of one class receiving just one hour of practical exercise one week, and two hours the next week. This does not meet the NSW Education Department minimum requirements above. Another class receives one hour of practical exercise one week, and three hours the next, still not meeting the minimum requirements above. In addition to this, students have been instructed that during the single session/one hour class, physical activity must be undertaken in their Formal uniform. Does this meet OH&S regulations if children are wearing leather shoes with insufficient grip to undertake moderate physical exercise safely? During winter, how are girls (in particular in their long, heavy skirts) expected to undertake moderate physical exercise effectively?

2. Time pressures and stress on the kids needing to race to the buses when PE is in the last period, wasting their exercise time to change and creating immense stress in ensuring they don't miss the bus home. Children are very aware their parents would need to drive up to 1.5 hours in some cases to collect them if they miss the afternoon bus.

Further to our conversation and your suggestion that students who catch the buses home may leave in their PE uniform, by requiring students to wear formal uniform to school and change into PE for the class and be permitted to travel home in PE uniform, children will still be burdened with carrying their formal attire home.

In addition to impacts to children travelling by bus, parents who collect their children after school will be kept waiting while they change.

3. Students who travel long distances on buses home directly to/from school are not in public. If the goal is to improve the school's public perception, it is not relevant in these instances. We also query how one practical PE session a fortnight and all students wearing the PE uniform home (either by bus or parental pickup) impacts the school's image so drastically in TAC's view?
4. Many parents have reported their children have expressed that they're uncomfortable and anxious changing in front of other students. This policy increases stress on (already stressed)

children who do not wish to undress in front of others. This is of particular sensitivity during adolescence and puberty. Who are we to say this is necessary and must be done. Children are people and have the right to choose what they are and are not comfortable with, to be productive and proactive in society, to find their voice and to speak up when necessary. Isn't this what educators are teaching our kids? Children's privacy should be respected, as should the feedback from families. We request that parent consultation be undertaken by Trinity Anglican College to garner the appropriate feedback on this policy notwithstanding another room or eventual additional cubicles that may be provided for students changing.

5. Increased stress on the children trying to manage storing, transporting, and retaining uniform pieces. There is an increased risk of losing uniform items at school and on the buses which from the parent Facebook group you'd observe is already a huge problem with lost items never being returned. The increased luggage burden complicates their already uncomfortable and draining travel time of up to 2 hours on two buses each way between school/home.
6. Inability to store additional shoes/bags in their locker as they can barely fit their backpack and laptops into the dimensions that the school currently provides. Spare uniforms/shoes are left on the top of lockers in many cases leaving them open to theft/loss, or alternatively are squashed into their lockers. TAC students walking in public with crushed blazers and pants/skirts does nothing to lift up the school's public image. If TAC's goal is to improve public perception of the school, not providing adequate and secure hanging/storage space will result in Trinity students wearing crushed, dishevelled uniforms in public and quickly become counter-productive. If larger lockers are required to facilitate this policy required by TAC, TAC should be responsible for the cost of such upgrades.
7. Per the communication with a TAC staff member, this existing policy was only suspended during COVID and is now being reinstated. From all local hospital and media reports we don't believe the driver for suspension of this policy has passed. COVID-19 is still rampant in the Albury/Wodonga region with more and more students falling ill every week needing to isolate for 7 days and losing their class time.

Per our conversation on Friday it was highlighted by you that leather shoes were needed for subjects such as Science (practical), Cooking (practical) etc. We understand and accept this Health & Safety aspect of the uniform requirement. It is important for us as parents to secure our children's safety when they not under our care. We suggest a simple change of shoes for the appropriate classes rather than a full uniform change.

We ask that you please review our petition and parents' comments (as at today's date) carefully and consider the merits of removing this unnecessary uniform policy.

We request a formal feedback opportunity for all parents to express their concerns. There are many more parents who, because of the inability to discuss this topic on the Trinity Parent's SOS page, are unaware of the conversations currently underway regarding this policy.

We look forward to your response at your earliest opportunity.

Thank you.

Regards,

Parents of Students at Trinity Anglican College

(Please see attached documents providing petition signatories and comments)