
EVENING UPDATE - SEPTEMBER 6

Good evening, students,

We hope you've had a wonderful weekend. We wanted to reach out today to share an update with you regarding our dress code and to answer your [frequently asked questions](#).

Like other Singapore secondary schools, we have a uniform and a dress code, and we must continue to have one. Having said that, we want to do our best to try to provide a uniform that is as comfortable for students and as affordable for families as is possible given what is available. We also want to make sure that students and families have an avenue for providing ongoing feedback and for sharing new concerns, questions, and suggestions.

We know that there are some important questions, suggestions, and concerns regarding the dress code and some of the changes that went into effect school-wide on September 1st. As such, we wanted to address some of the feedback and questions we've received from students.

As we mentioned in the last Weekly Eagle, we have been talking with the Student Council, and we met with student leaders for an extended period of time on Friday afternoon. We want you to know that your representatives have worked hard to try to clearly describe both the issues that students have identified and potential solutions. Thank you to all of you who took the time to speak with [Student Council members](#) to share your viewpoints. We encourage you to continue to reach out to them if you have any further feedback.

Some of the issues raised include the lack of open dialogue with the current student body about dress code expectations as well as the motivations behind some of the changes that have recently gone into effect. To be clear, an extensive, thoughtful, and inclusive process was used to gather input (including input from high school students) over the past several years. All of the decisions about the uniform and dress code were made at the end of that process. These were school-wide decisions, and they affect and involve not only people at the high school but also at the elementary and middle schools. For these reasons, we cannot re-open all of the decisions made over the course of the past few years.

Having said that, it is absolutely fair to expect to be told why changes are going into effect, and it is absolutely fair for you to ask to have your voices heard, to ask for the opportunity to share any new concerns, and for action to be taken if appropriate.

We are taking three actions immediately as a result of the conversations we have had with the Student Council.

- First, for the time being, we are postponing the issuance of dress code violations for infractions related to the new expectations that came into effect on September 1st. This includes postponing the issuance of infractions for wearing older uniform styles and for neglecting to wear lanyards. We would like to use the next week to collaborate with high school students and student leaders to understand and resolve some of the concerns before we continue issuing any violations. On uniform days, we still expect students to come to school appropriately dressed in school-issued articles of clothing. In addition, any dress code violations that were logged last week will be removed from students' disciplinary records. As a reminder, the first dress code violation a student receives in a given academic year is a warning and subsequent violations result in additional consequences including detention, reflective discussions with the Dean of Student Life or Heads of House, and phone calls home.
- Second, we are going to be devoting a portion of the Lower Grades & Upper Grades Assemblies tomorrow (2:30 PM on Monday) to hearing students' viewpoints on dress code and other issues. We encourage you all to use your voices respectfully and honestly. During the assemblies, Advisories will have the opportunity to share their questions and opinions via a Google form, and educators will respond directly.
- Third, we will meet again with the Executive Student Council on Tuesday afternoon to consider several proposals that have been made regarding the dress code. Please share any proposals you may have with your [Student Council representatives](#) in advance of Tuesday's meeting.

We will keep you up to date as we make progress together as a community. Please continue to offer your feedback, and please keep sharing your ideas about solutions!

A true indicator of what kind of community we are and what kind of community we want to be is how we accept divergent views and how we deal with disagreements to foster positive change. Any community can remain united when the issues are neither difficult nor controversial. Are we the kind of community that can remain united when the issues are challenging, complex, and affect us in different ways?

Thank you, Eagles, and we look forward to continuing the conversation.

Best,

Mr. Ly, Ms. Zuber Meehan, Mr. Murgatroyd, and Mr. Poullard

Frequently Asked Questions - Uniform & Dress Code

- **Why do we have a uniform and a dress code?**

Upon reflection, we feel we did not proactively and clearly explain the reasons for our uniform and dress code expectations. We thank the Student Council for pointing this out and feel students deserve to understand why these expectations exist.

Our uniform expectations pertain to the clothing that may be worn at SAS and fall within the broader category of dress code expectations. All [secondary students in Singapore schools](#) must wear a uniform. SAS has a uniform as part of its dress code, and SAS students are to remain in school uniform for the entire school day. Our school uniform and dress code are intended to:

- Create a safe learning environment by making it much easier to identify SAS students at a glance;
 - Signify that you are an Eagle and a proud member of the SAS community;
 - Reflect a seriousness of purpose and a concern for your academic experience;
 - Connect us by helping our youngest Eagles and our oldest Eagles see themselves in one another;
 - Eliminate the need for daily decision-making about what to wear to school;
 - Demonstrate a level of personal responsibility in ensuring you are wearing the correct clothing each day.
- **What was the process by which decisions about uniform and dress code were made?**

2016-17. At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, uniform sales of polos, PE shirts, and bottoms were moved out of the PTA and Booster Club and to the direct purview of the school. With this shift in practice, the school decided to revisit its uniform and accompanying dress code, and a uniform committee was formed. The committee was made up of educators from each division, central administration, and the operations team. The first step the committee took was surveying the community for uniform feedback. One of the recommendations was that the school provide a one-stop-shop for our families to purchase all approved uniform pieces; another was that the official uniform pieces align from preschool through grade 12. (Seniors, you might remember that prior to 2018-19, there were numerous options in school uniforms

across divisions.) The committee's goal was to create a one-stop shop for families to purchase everything they need, combined with a clear, concise, and easy to understand uniform.

2017-18. The uniform committee spent the 2017-18 school year looking carefully at different suppliers, collating samples, and having students (and their parents) in preschool through grade 12 try on and provide feedback for the various prototypes. In the high school, students across grade levels, sizes and body types wore samples for a week at a time. These students met with our uniform consultant to offer feedback on the fabrics, fit and functionality. Some of you might remember the purple sample uniforms! Additionally, samples were placed in the divisional offices for any student and parent to try on, and a feedback form was issued. All high school students were given the opportunity to provide feedback. Based on all of this community feedback, the school adopted the new uniform and dress code at the end of that year.

2018-19 & 2019-20. Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, the new pieces were available in our just opened Eagle Stop. Recognizing that families may have recently purchased styles that were slated to be phased out, the school decided to "sunset" (i.e., gradually phase out) the older uniform styles. For the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years, the sunsetting pieces of the dress code - cargo shorts, canvas skirts, polo shirts with the old logo, and plain navy or white non-SAS sweatshirts - were considered part of our dress code.

2020-21. With the unusual start this school year and the reality that because of COVID-19 parents and students could not try on sample sizes in the Eagle Stop, the school decided to extend the life of the older pieces for one additional month. As shared in eNews, a grace period was provided for students to purchase the newer styles, sharing that students would need to uphold the new dress code expectations beginning September 1st. Additionally, the school has decided to hold off on only SAS sweatshirts being permitted until the start of the second semester, January 2021.

- **Seniors will only be able to wear the new uniform items for one year. Is it fair to expect them to spend money to purchase these new items?**

The older uniform styles have not been sold at SAS since the 2017-18 school year. Over two years have passed since then. The uniform committee decided to permit students and families to continue to use older uniform styles during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years. We believe that two years is a sufficient time period to phase out older uniform styles. Current seniors have been allowed to wear these older styles during their sophomore and junior years, and thus we believe it is fair to expect our seniors to adhere to the same standards expected of other students at the high school. Indeed, we should consider whether it is unfair to continue to allow students who had access to older uniform styles to continue to wear those styles when

those styles are not accessible to new students and younger students. We should also consider whether it is fair to allow students to continue to wear older uniform styles when countless students and families already made adjustments and purchased new uniforms in accordance with our expectations. We would like to hear from students who feel there is a viewpoint on this issue that we may have missed. We encourage you to reach out to your [Student Council representatives](#).

- **My uniform doesn't seem to fit my body type well. What should I do?**

As mentioned in the response to an earlier question, the uniform committee asked students to try on and provide feedback on various uniform prototypes. All high school students had the opportunity to provide feedback, and as a result of the feedback we received, we believe the uniforms offered today are better suited to fit a range of body types than previous uniform styles. Having said that, we need your continued feedback on this. We can and will continue to give feedback to our vendors as students bring new issues to our attention.

Please use this [Google form](#) to let us know if you have some specific feedback regarding the fit of our uniforms.

- **Larger sizes seem to cost more than smaller sizes. Is this fair?**

There are two prices for uniforms. One price is for “kids” sizes while the other price is for “youth/adult” sizes. The price difference is not intended to reflect a bias towards smaller body types. Rather, it reflects the difference between the costs incurred by clothing manufacturers to make clothing for younger people and clothing for older people. This is standard practice in the clothing industry.

- **Do we have a dress code because we are attempting to “minimize distraction”?**

Absolutely not.

Our dress code is not in place for that reason. We will not tolerate members of our community causing others to feel body shamed, and we do not believe that students of any sex or gender are responsible for the reactions others may have to their appearance. We are all responsible for our own reactions.

Having said that, we have a dress code that we expect all students to adhere to and that all students should expect educators to uphold for the reasons stated in the answer to "[Why do we have a uniform and a dress code?](#)" A dress code consists of conventions that a community adopts together. Our dress code reflects the conventions we have chosen here at SAS as a PreSchool-12 community.