

# Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

14th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Wednesday  
26 October 2022

PE1914: Ban school uniforms in secondary  
schools

## Note by the Clerk

<b>Lodged on</b>	30 November 2021
<b>Petitioner</b>	Matthew Lewis Simpson
<b>Petition summary</b>	Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to remove the requirement for school uniforms in secondary schools.
<b>Webpage</b>	<a href="https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1914">https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1914</a>

## Introduction

1. The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on [20 April 2022](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to keep the petition open, pending the publication of the Scottish Government's consultation on school uniforms. The Committee also agreed to write to the Scottish Government.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received two new responses from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, which are set out in **Annexe C**.
4. Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the [petition's webpage](#).
5. Further background information about this petition can be found in the [SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.

6. The Scottish Government's initial position on this petition can be found on the [petition's webpage](#).

## **Action**

The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

**Clerk to the Committee**

## Annexe A

### PE1914: Ban school uniforms in secondary schools

#### Petitioner

Matthew Lewis Simpson

#### Date lodged

30 November 2021

#### Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to remove the requirement for school uniforms in secondary schools

#### Previous action

I have contacted Minister for Children and Young People, and they had given me no response.

#### Background information

School uniforms prevent students from expressing their personality and culture.

They're a source of anxiety for low income families; uniforms are expensive and are an unnecessary cost. Students want to be able to dress comfortably, in their choice of style. Uniforms don't consider weather, and they're not suitable for all year round.

They are uncomfortable. Concentration is increased when students feel like they're in a safe environment, and wearing their own clothes is much more pleasant than stiff blazers and itchy skirts.

Uniforms don't stop judgement from others. Wearing uniforms immediately makes you a representative of the school you're from.

Others can judge you by your school before they've even met you. Students shouldn't just be seen as a representative and part of something bigger. They should be seen as their own person. Overall, they're just unnecessary. Wearing their own clothes is something students need, when school is such a stress already.

## Annexe B

### Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE1914 on 20 April 2022

**The Convener:** The next petition is PE1914, on banning school uniforms in secondary schools, which was lodged by Matthew Lewis Simpson. The petition calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to remove the requirement for school uniforms for older school pupils. The petitioner cites a range of reasons for lodging the petition, including uniform costs for low-income families, pupil choice and the need for comfortable and weather-appropriate clothing options.

The petition was previously considered on 19 January, when we agreed to write to the Scottish Government, the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, the National Parent Forum of Scotland and the Scottish Youth Parliament. At that meeting, we heard that the Scottish Government had committed to updating its school uniform guidance and that a public consultation on the issue was imminent. We have now received responses from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills and all the other stakeholders that we have contacted, included the Scottish Youth Parliament, which was unable to come to a determination on the issue. I thought that that was interesting.

At this stage, we probably want to keep the petition open, pending the consultation that the Scottish Government is about to undertake. We believe that it is likely to take place during the summer.

Would colleagues like to make any comments or recommendations?

**Alexander Stewart:** I concur that we should keep the petition open. We have received information from the Scottish Government about the consultation. It is very important that we highlight the evidence that we have received and that we seek assurances that children and young people will be fully involved in the consultation process, including in co-designing it, to ensure that they are willing participants. As we have discussed in the past, the focus is sometimes on the identity that a school uniform brings, but young people have the right to express their views. If they can do so through the consultation, we might receive more information that might help us to make a decision.

**The Convener:** Do colleagues agree to keep the petition open and to proceed on the basis that has just been discussed?

Members indicated agreement.

# Annexe C

## Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills submission of 19 May 2022

### PE1914/F Ban school uniforms in secondary schools

In correspondence to the Committee in support of its consideration of PE1914: Ban school uniforms in secondary schools I indicated that I intended to bring forward a national consultation to inform the further development of school uniform policy and guidance in Scotland.

I am pleased to inform the Committee that the consultation has been published. It seeks the views of anyone with an interest in school uniform; families, education authorities, schools, suppliers, organisations and individuals in support of the development of a new national policy and guidance. The consultation will run from 19 May until 14 October 2022. This extended consultation period recognises the school holiday period and that this is also a time when many families will be buying uniform for the next school year. The consultation is available from [Scottish Government - Citizen Space \(consult.gov.scot\)](https://consult.gov.scot).

I also confirm that the following matters are not within the scope of the consultation. It is not intended that the school uniform items will be mandated at national levels. Instead it is intended that the national guidance will inform local authorities and schools policies.

It is not intended that there will be a national school uniform policy which is applied in all schools – therefore this is not the subject of this consultation and is not in the scope of the consultation. Further, it is not intended that school uniform in Scotland will be abolished. Therefore, that is also not within the scope of the consultation.

The consultation is directly linked to our work on reducing the cost of the school day. We have already, in partnership with local authorities, delivered on our commitment to increase the level of school clothing grant in Scotland, increasing this vital support to at least £120 for primary school pupils and £150 for secondary school pupils. This was in

place for the start of the new school year in 2021. We have further committed, as part of the Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party - Shared Policy Programme, to bring forward national statutory guidance on school uniform in Scotland. The consultation is an important first step in delivering that shared aim.

I have also written to the Convener of the Education, Children and Young People Committee to bring the consultation to their attention.

I hope that this information is helpful to the Committee.

## 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.