

Sporty dress for success

REBECCA WHITFIELD-BAKER

FORGET formal attire: When it comes to school uniforms, the sportier the better, according to a snapshot of public school parents and teachers.

Almost three-quarters of those surveyed by parent body the South Australian Association of State School Organisations (SAASSO) agreed students should be allowed to wear "sports-type uniforms every day".

And it is teachers more than parents or those in leadership positions who embrace the notion most. A total of 88 per cent

of teachers surveyed gave the idea the tick, ahead of 74 per cent of parents and 67 per cent of school leaders.

SAASSO president David Knuckey said about 1000 parents, teachers and principals were surveyed.

He said sports uniforms were cheaper and "preferred by students and staff".

Mr Knuckey also said that they "support physical activity – particularly for girls, who are typically less active than boys – and they are more comfortable".

"Improved education and wellbeing outcomes for girls is a policy priority for SAASSO,

as is overall student health and fitness," he said.

Responding to the survey results, Sport SA chief executive Leah Cassidy said there was good evidence to support the wearing of sports uniforms, especially for girls.

"We are still seeing very high female dropout (from sport) around the age of 14 and 15 ... there is a lot of research to suggest female school uniforms are one of the barriers and reasons for (the dropout)," she said.

SA Primary Principals Association president Angela Falkenberg said a school's governing councils, made up

mostly of parents, set uniform policies. "Most public primary schools do have an activity-based uniform ... we want kids to be active, to keep moving, to be out on the monkey bars, kicking soccer balls and rolling around on the grass," she said.

The Education Department said a school's dress code should "be accessible, inclusive, flexible, and allow the right of choice".

Some respondents argued children should change out of sports clothes after a sports lesson. "The idea of a sports uniform is to prevent students returning to class in soiled and sweaty clothes. A separate uni-

form alleviates this issue," one said. But to Marion father of four Luke Hibberd, a sporty school uniform was a "no-brainer". "It's so important to me that kids are active and I would hate to think they (weren't being) active at recess and lunch due to a restrictive uniform," he said.

"For me, it's a no-brainer they were comfortable clothes."

In other survey results, respondents rejected a call by the SA Commissioner for Children and Young People for parents to lose the right to remove their children from sex education classes. Almost 70 per cent voted "no".



Levi Hibberd, 12, stays active in his school sports uniform. Picture: Morgan Sette

Shantae's star shines bright



Shantae Barnes-Cowan, 18, has juggled year 12 studies with a flourishing acting career. Picture: Simon Cross

NATHAN DAVIES

YEAR 12 can be a juggle at the best of times, but Shantae Barnes-Cowan has taken multi-tasking to a whole new level.

The 18-year-old actor, who is an Adnyamathanha woman from Whyalla, has filmed two movies and a miniseries on sets in Queensland, Western Australia, Coober Pedy and Adelaide while completing her studies.

She is also one of 157 young people in care – either living with foster and kinship carers or in residential care – who will receive a certificate to recognise reaching the end of year 12 at a ceremony at Government House tomorrow.

Shantae said the support of her "two big families", which includes her foster mum and dad Jeanette and Steve Cowan, and three sisters and seven brothers, has helped her successfully juggle her busy 2021 schedule.

"Education is so important because it's getting you ready for the future and I've been so lucky to have the support of my loved ones and to have been able to seek out support when I need it," Shantae said. "I'm passionate about my culture, my family and friends and my education."

"Culture is important for how we portray ourselves, where we belong and what we believe in."

"Even when things get tough, it helps to have a goal that you're working towards that will make you feel happy and proud of yourself."

Shantae is currently filming the eight-part fantasy TV series *Firebite* in Adelaide. She plays the lead role of Shanika, an Aboriginal Australian hunter battling a colony of vampires in the middle of the South Australian desert. Shantae also completed filming on film *Wyrwood Apocalypse* and miniseries *Sweet As This* year, with both set for release in 2022.

"I hope to continue acting and pursuing my dream. I hope to keep aiming high and I also want to be more of a role model for my town and the young Aboriginal kids who live there," Shantae said.

Child Protection Minister Rachel Sanderson praised the young people in care who completed year 12.

Don't overburden kids with holiday homework, warn experts

CLARE PEDDIE

SCHOOLS are loading up next year's year 12s with holiday homework assignments, but experts warn against too much, saying students deserve their summer break.

As soon as the year 11 exams were over, some schools handed out course materials for the following year, including reading lists and details about as-

signments for 2022. At St John's Grammar in Belair, students were invited to meet their year 12 teachers and were set tasks such as revision of year 11 materials, memorising key facts and preparing for early 2022 tests.

But it's not just the private schools, as public Marryatville High School did much the same to start preparing its class of 2022.

The chairwoman of the state's Child Development Council, Dr Anne Glover, encouraged parents to find out how much work was required and talk to their child's school if it seemed excessive.

She said spending time with friends, developing social skills, engaging in other activities and having a good rest with free time was equally important for wellbeing.

"If it's only a small piece of work to keep the learning continuity, I can understand schools wanting to do that, but if it's about preparation for next year I think that's different," she said.

"It would depend on how much it would affect your teenager's daily life. If it meant a major commitment each day I would want to talk further with the school."

Association of Independent Schools of South Australia chief executive Carolyn Grant-skalns said summer holiday assignments ensured students remained "academically fit".

"But it is entirely an individual school decision," she said.

Catholic Education SA deputy director John Mula said the summer holidays were primarily for relaxation and rest, especially after a chal-

lenging year of mask-wearing and other Covid restrictions.

"(Homework) would vary from school to school and might include some work on the (SACE) research project," he said. "Many students also enjoy taking the opportunity to read texts in different subject areas over the summer."

The Education Department said public schools determined their own homework policies.