

Midlothian Council backs call to ban uniforms with school logos

Midlothian councillors have backed a call for schools to be banned from demanding children wear uniforms with school logos on them.

A motion brought to a meeting of the council said the cost of a uniform with a school emblem sown on can be more than three times the cost of a basic unbranded version.

And it called on councillors to help families cut the cost by backing an immediate stop to schools being able to demand parents buy the more expensive outfits.

The Labour group motion brought by Councillors Kelly Drummond and Stephen Curran was backed by SNP council leader Kelly Parry.

It aid: "One of the main reasons for the introduction of school uniforms was to reduce the financial pressures on families.

"Over the years the cost of embroidered jerseys, sweatshirts, polo shirts and tee shirts has become far more expensive than buying plain coloured ones from retail or online stores. This is partly due to the fact that there is little competition in this market."

The motion gave as an example the cost for families of buying

six red polo shirts for a 9-10year-old from Marks & Spencer at £24 and six red sweatshirts for the same age at £36 – a total cost of £60.

It said buying the same six polo shirts with an embroidered logo would cost £88.20 with a further £103.20 for six branded sweaters – a total of £191.40.

Many schools across the county already make the school logo optional with some promoting supermarket chains as possible suppliers on their websites.

Low income families in Midlothian can also apply for a school uniform grant from the local authority which is worth £120 for primary aged children.

Councillor David Virgo, Conservatives, raised concerns that bringing in the ban after many families had already forked out for embroidered clothing would create an inequality among pupils.

He said: “Many of the events where uniform requirements are discussed have already taken place for the coming year.”

However Councillor Derek Milligan said there were some families who could not afford to pay for the more expensive uniforms and were already being identified by the demand.

He said: “There is a small cohort of families who cannot buy the embroidered uniforms or have to go without food or heating to buy them so they are already being identified.”

Councillors unanimously agreed to back the motion.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter