

Dear Beata

I am replying with regards to your questions around the wearing of the veil by teacher/support staff in English schools.

Issue

The recent headline case was actually relating to a Muslim classroom assistant who refused to remove her full face veil in lessons and was subsequently dismissed. She appealed but an employment tribunal determined that she had not been discriminated against.

Response

There was no direct response from the Government on this issue as we are not the employer of either teachers or support staff working in our schools. Dress codes including the wearing of veils by school workforce staff in our schools are very much an issue for the employer, whether that is the local authority or the governing body at the school.

As part of the terms and conditions of employment agreed with employees they are required to establish an appropriate dress code, relevant to the individual setting, taking into account the requirements of the post and equality and diversity matters.

Rationale

Current guidance states that schools should consult widely when drawing up or amending existing policies on dress codes and have regard to their responsibilities under Equalities legislation.

If the Government were to change this approach and, for example, implement a national policy, schools would lose the flexibility that they require so that they can meet the needs of the community. Each case therefore has to be considered separately and on its own merits and we strongly believe that employers/schools are in the best position to make these decisions.

I hope that this helps, however, should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to get back in touch.

Yours sincerely

Peter Windram
New Professionalism Project
School Resources Group

The original of this email was scanned for viruses by the Government Secure Intranet Anti-Virus service supplied by Cable&Wireless in partnership with MessageLabs. (CCTM Certificate Number 2006/04/0007.) On leaving the GSi this email was certified virus free.
Communications via the GSi may be automatically logged, monitored and/or recorded for legal purposes.