



Why we are discussing a timely refresh of the Maylands Peninsula PS uniform

At Maylands Peninsula Primary School (**MPPS**), like at other schools, the P&C – made up of parent and caregiver volunteers – has been discussing the possibility of adding a standalone Faction T-shirt to the school uniform. These discussions have been going on for more than 10 years. This was in response to the growing number of queries raised by parents/caregivers at both the P&C-run Uniform Shop and at P&C meetings about stocking Faction shirts as a standard uniform item, as is common practice in many schools.

The combination of naming the MPPS Factions (**Factions**) – Ferguson, Brearley, Venville and Hardey – in 2016 and the introduction of Friday sport for our senior students, the Cross Country Carnival and Running Club, together with the normal operations of the Physical Education programme and increased parent enquiries and subsequent conversations at P&C meetings, prompted the P&C in early 2020 to revisit the option of adding a Faction shirt to the school uniform.

In response to questions raised at the P&C level about the option of a standalone Faction T-shirt, the P&C in May 2020 explored the possibility with the school Leadership Team (**Leadership Team**) – which comprises principal Paul Andrijich, deputy principals Narelle Alver and Rosemary Johnson and manager corporate services Megan Mohr – of seeking sponsorship to purchase standalone Faction shirts, which could be donated to the school community. 'In principle' agreement was given by the Leadership Team to explore this opportunity further. The school Board (**Board**) was made aware of this possibility at its 8 June meeting. However, after subsequent discussions at the P&C level, the sponsorship option was discarded. In subsequent meetings, the P&C considered a number of other options including designing and producing its own Faction T-shirt to donate to families within the school. This was also later discounted by the P&C following on-going discussions.

At the P&C meeting on 5 August, it was decided to seek input from the school community to see if there was 'appetite' for a standalone Faction T-shirt, available as part of the standard uniform options. The P&C felt the 2020 Faction Athletics Carnival on 4 September would be a good opportunity to seek feedback from the school community.

The Board was made aware of the proposed course of action at its 24 August meeting. The Board supported the idea of the Leadership Team establishing a committee (**Uniform Committee**), comprising representatives of the P&C, Uniform Shop convenors/volunteers, Board, Leadership Team and MPPS staff, to provide input and source feedback from all sectors of the school community. Furthermore, the Leadership Team discussed the Faction shirt proposal with staff during Term 2 and there was recognition that, with the growing prominence in the school of the Faction-related activities outlined above, a Faction shirt was warranted.

At the 2020 Faction Athletics Carnival, the P&C conducted a 'straw poll' at the cake stall with 'mock-ups' of a Faction T-shirt on display. Furthermore, P&C members wearing the 'mock-ups' moved through the parents and caregivers' crowd to seek their views. Based on the positive feedback from parents/caregivers on the day, the P&C was of the view that there was positive general consensus and support for a Faction shirt to become part of the school uniform.

In early September, the Leadership Team met with P&C representatives who were responsible for approaching uniform providers to come up with uniform options. It was at this meeting that the possibility of combining the two shirts into the one hybrid design was discussed. After considering the merits of a standalone shirt versus a hybrid shirt assessed against a range of factors important to our school community, the hybrid design emerged as the favoured option of the Leadership Team.

Having spent several months now canvassing the possibility of a Faction shirt concept with staff and the Board, together with the support of the P&C and feedback from the school community, the Leadership Team decided that the inclusion of a Faction shirt was warranted. The Leadership Team announced its decision at the P&C meeting on 9 September. Furthermore, given the factors that had been considered as part of the Leadership Team's decision-making process, the Leadership Team explained why the hybrid uniform concept was its preferred uniform option.

The Uniform Committee met on 2 November to identify the various factors that needed to be put to the Leadership Team for consideration prior to the Leadership Team updating the Board at the Board's next meeting.

The Leadership Team's decision to progress a hybrid Faction shirt and the process update were shared with the Board on 23 November, in line with the Board's role to remain informed of matters including updates or changes to the MPPS dress code. The Board responded positively to the proposed new design but is yet to have a formal involvement in the process.

Following the decision by the Leadership Team and the positive reception of the Board, the P&C wanted the Leadership Team to announce the proposed new uniform design to the school community at the end of 2020. However, faced with uncertainty about MPPS uniform stock levels because of COVID-19 related logistic challenges faced by the school's uniform supplier, the P&C decided a community announcement should be delayed until Term 1, 2021, when there was more clarity about stock levels.

The Leadership Team announced the proposed uniform update to the school community on 4 March 2021.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Maylands Peninsula Primary School updating the school polo shirt?

There has been no change to the MPPS school uniform since the school's creation in 2004. Over the past 10 years – and since 2016 in particular – there has been a rising number of queries from parents/caregivers at both the Uniform Shop and at P&C meetings about stocking faction shirts as a standard uniform item, as is common practice in many schools. The introduction of additional Faction activities, such as senior sport on Fridays, the Cross Country Carnival and Running Club, together with the normal operations of the Physical Education programme alongside our Faction Athletics and Swimming Carnival programme, prompted the P&C in early 2020 to re-visit the option of including a faction shirt in the school dress code.

How long has this proposed update to the MPPS polo shirt been in the pipeline?

The process began in early 2020 with discussions about design options and first consultations with the school community. The process is continuing. As the school said in its *Connect* message in Term 1, 2021, the intention is for the new uniform design to be introduced into the MPPS community from 2023 onwards.

What has been the process underpinning this decision?

In line with standard school practice, the three key parties involved in the uniform update are the Leadership Team, the P&C and the Board. The Leadership Team, in consultation with the P&C, explores the options and carries out consultations and feedback with the school community. This process is continuing. **The Leadership Team will make a final decision on changes to the school uniform, in line with Department of Education guidelines.** The Board provides a final sign-off, based on criteria including affordability of the proposed updated uniform and the fairness and appropriateness of the process that underpinned the proposed uniform change.

Will the new uniform be mandatory?

Under the Department of Education's *Dress Code for Students in Public Schools Policy*, all schools must have a dress code. While the vast majority of our students wear the MPPS polo shirt or collared shirt in our school colours to school each day, there is no mandated requirement to do so. However, our expectations remain high that our students wear our school colours each and every day.

Why the hybrid polo shirt? Why can't we have a separate Faction T-shirt for sports carnivals, PE and other related activities?

After much discussion, the Leadership Team was of the view that a hybrid polo shirt that incorporated the Faction colours into the current uniform design was the preferred option. The factors that were taken into consideration as part of the overall decision-making process to get to this stage included:

- **Cost** – there would be no need for parents/caregivers to purchase an additional shirt(s) to wear to school or for sport because the new hybrid polo shirt would serve all purposes;
- **Environment** – fewer uniform purchases for standalone T-shirts and school polo shirts, together with fewer uniform options, will ultimately mean less landfill;
- **Sun Smart** – the collared hybrid polo shirt would offer our students greater sun protection than a Faction T-shirt;
- **School operations** – in many schools that have standalone Faction T-shirts, there is often confusion among the school community about what day(s) their children can/should wear their Faction T-shirt. This would not be a problem with the one hybrid polo shirt that is worn every day;
- **Material** – the general consensus from parents/caregivers is that the current school uniform shirt material is difficult to clean and, as such, comes to the end of its serviceable life reasonably quickly. Materials that are more durable, washable and wearable are preferred and would be incorporated in the hybrid polo shirt; and
- **Options down the track** – if there was an opportunity to incorporate the Factions into other aspects of school life, then the hybrid polo shirt may be of assistance. Running Club and senior sport were not part of the school landscape four years ago but are now well entrenched and immensely popular with students. There may be other additions to the school programme in coming years.

In short, a hybrid school uniform that incorporates the Faction colours was the preferred option for the Leadership Team. For students and parents/caregivers there would be no need to worry about which day Faction shirts had to be worn to school and no need for parents/caregivers to purchase additional standalone shirts. The P&C volunteers who run the Uniform Shop would not need to stock additional uniforms in what is a reasonably small space. The hybrid shirt covers all eventualities.

However, it must be noted that while the hybrid polo shirt proposal is the recommended option, it is yet to be determined whether it is a viable option for the P&C, which runs the Uniform Shop. The Uniform Committee, in consultation with the P&C, will canvas prospective suppliers to ascertain all logistical or operational requirements and incorporate these into the final decision on the uniform update.

Will the new hybrid polo shirt be more expensive than the current polo shirt?

Based on our conversations with the current school uniform provider and other prospective providers, the cost for the hybrid polo shirt – based on the currently proposed material – will likely be similar to the current school uniform. There may be a modest increase in price if the cost of the material changes, but this will be because of the type of fabric used rather than because of the design update.

Will my child/ren still be able to wear the current school polo shirt beyond the start of the 2023 school year?

Yes. Students will still be able to wear the existing school polo shirt beyond 2023. However, once stocks of the 'old' polo shirt run out, the only option for purchase will be the updated design.

Will the 'old' polo shirt be available for the purchase from the Uniform Shop?

Yes, as long as there still is 'old' stock available. Second-hand polo shirts in the 'old' design will still be available for purchase for parents/caregivers, though in time, these will be replaced by second-hand polo shirts in the updated design. Once the updated design is available for purchase, the initial 'stock' availability will obviously be limited to new shirts only. This will change over time.

Can my child still wear a low-cost polo shirt, in the school colours, purchased from retailers like Kmart, Target and Big W?

Yes. In line with the *Dress Code for Students in Public Schools Policy*, the option to purchase collared shirts or any other articles of clothing in school colours from the relevant retailers remains in place. The base colour of the polo shirt is the most predominate element of the proposed polo shirt update.

What is the plan for old school polo shirts?

We have researched and identified a possible opportunity to enter into a recycling arrangement with 'Clutterbugs'. Parents/caregivers will be able to drop off old uniforms, either at the Uniform Shop or another location agreed with Clutterbugs, which collects unwanted items, such as clothing, and distributes them to people in need. Even polo shirts that are stained or torn are accepted as they are used for rags.

Are the updated school polo shirt and the changes to the Faction points system related?

They are two separate changes that were decided independent of each other. The increased prominence of the Faction system at MPPS complements the changes to the school polo shirt. However, the structure and operation of the Faction system at MPPS is an operational matter driven and directed by the Leadership Team. For more information about MPPS' Faction system, please contact the school office.

Why do we have faction systems in schools? How does it make a difference in our school?

Faction systems are commonplace across schools in Western Australia. The changes to the Faction system were discussed with staff in mid-2020 as part of our preparation for the Public School Review process, which took place in November 2020. As part of these discussions, staff recognised that while MPPS had a clearly articulated process for dealing with negative behaviour, we did not have a common school-wide approach to acknowledge positive behaviour in the playground. Given we had seen a significant fall in negative behaviours since the introduction of the Faction system five years ago, staff felt that extending the Faction points system into other areas of the school had merit. Furthermore, this decision to encourage and recognise students' positive behaviour through a range of whole-school processes, including the Faction system, was a recommendation put forward by the Public School Review Team in its report to the school community. For more information about MPPS' Faction system, please contact the school office.

Did you consider any other ways of including Faction colours on the uniform?

There were discussions at several P&C meetings in 2020 about options to incorporate Faction colours into other articles of the school uniform. However, a polo shirt was considered the best option. For example, reversible bucket hats were considered, though these are not popular among senior students and hats are not always worn when students participate in sporting activities.

Why has there not been wider consultation about the update to the school polo shirt?

As the main elements of the school uniform – colour, school logo and motto – will remain the same, the Leadership Team considered the proposed hybrid polo shirt design to be an update of the existing school uniform and not a completely new design that was markedly different to the current design. As such, the process of consultation adopted by the Leadership Team was through the formation of a Uniform Committee. This process was supported by the Board at its 24 August meeting.

Who is on the Uniform Committee?

A Uniform Committee was constituted by the Leadership Team in Term 4, 2020 specifically to work on the update to the school polo shirt. The committee comprises a P&C Executive member, a Board member (parent), school staff, Uniform Shop representatives (also P&C volunteers) and principal Paul Andrijich. This committee has met on several occasions to progress the update of the school polo shirt. The Board has been kept informed of the uniform update process through regular reports from Mr Andrijich.

How will the supplier of the proposed updated MPPS uniform be selected?

The Uniform Committee will request proposals from three experienced school uniform suppliers. The main criteria to be considered include wearability, breathability, washability, durability and affordability – in line with Department of Education dress code procedures. Other factors that will also be considered include storage, service and supply. The proposals from the three uniform suppliers will be summarised and presented at a P&C meeting later this year. This process is expected to commence in Term 2.

Will siblings be placed in the same Faction?

Yes, siblings are placed in the same Faction. This has always been the practice at MPPS. In the case of the proposed uniform update, it would also enable older students to pass their school polo shirts, once outgrown, to younger siblings.

When will my child be allocated a Faction?

Each student at MPPS is allocated a Faction upon enrolment. If they have an older sibling at the school, they will be allocated the same Faction. Students who do not have a Faction to be naturally aligned with are allocated a Faction based on the numbers of students in each Faction for that particular cohort to keep numbers across the four Factions relatively balanced. The Faction allocation process is run by the Leadership Team and has nothing to do with the P&C.

How can members of the school community offer input to the Uniform Committee?

Following a six-month process that included research and school community consultation, the Leadership Team made its recommendation in favour of the hybrid polo shirt design to the P&C. There will, however, be opportunities for further input from the school community to help move the proposal forward. Even though an extensive list of factors has already been considered as part of the overall process at the Leadership Team, Uniform Committee and P&C Executive level, the decision-making process remains ongoing and therefore open to further consultation, input and feedback. The best way to provide feedback is through the school at maylandspeninsula.ps@education.wa.edu.au, the P&C at pac@mpps.wa.edu.au or by attending P&C meetings.

Any parent/caregiver is welcome at P&C meetings and annual membership to the P&C is only \$1. We welcome any member of the school community who can help out in any way, whether this is through volunteering in the canteen, assisting in the Uniform Shop or with fundraising events. **Our school thrives with the help of volunteers, no matter how big or small the volunteer job is.** If you are unable to make P&C meetings, you can register your interest to receive the minutes of those meetings by sending an email to the P&C. Further information about the P&C is available on the school [website](#).

What is the role of the School Board in the process?

The Board provides governance oversight of school activities but does not – and is not allowed to – get involved in school operational matters. In this particular instance, the P&C initiated the conversation regarding the school uniform update process and is working with the Leadership Team to come up with a positive outcome, a process that has the support of the Board.

In respects to changes to the dress code, the Board is responsible for ensuring any changes are:

- based on advice from students, parents and staff;
- based on information from regular reviews of the dress code; and
- introduced only after reasonable notification to parents/caregivers.

The role of the Board is to ensure that thorough and appropriate consultation has taken place inclusive of staff, parents and students. The Board is not necessarily the ultimate deciders but rather the guardian of fair and due process.

The Board's involvement, at the end of this uniform update process, is to ratify the proposed changes to the school dress code that are being endorsed by the Leadership Team, following the completion of the consultation process and in accordance with the Department of Education criteria outlined above.