



Uniforms that encourage girls to play sport and be physically active

Body image plays a key role for girls to participate in sport and physical activity - uniforms are an important influence.

Research has identified that some girls (14-16yrs) do not want to participate in physical activity because they feel embarrassed or feel they are putting their bodies on display, and they do not meet society's beauty standards (Whitehead and Biddle, 2008).

Another study identified girls aged 14 years have 27% less confidence than boys the same age (YPulse, 2018). Girls need sport uniforms that make them feel comfortable, confident and ready to play sport and physical activity.

Our respondents

A total of 312 girls (12-18 years) located in Victoria completed a survey to share their thoughts and beliefs about sport uniforms, of these girls:



91% are active: of these girls **75%** participate in extra-curricular school sport and **83%** participate in sport outside of school



64% attended co-educated schools



10% identify as LGBTQI+



8% speak a second language at home



61% believe their body size is within the healthy range



Outside of school, more girls participate in informal physical activities such as walking for exercise (**83%**), jogging (**53%**) and gym/weight training (**36%**) than formal sports (netball **36%**, AFL **26%**, basketball **20%**)



What girls want

Key sport uniform needs were identified by girls.

1

Uniforms that make them feel **ready for sport**

2

Clothing that **fits them well**

3

Dark coloured bottoms

4

Uniforms made from **appropriate materials**

5

No unisex clothing

6

Do not want to feel over-exposed in their uniforms



What needs to be considered for girls?

Results are presented under three themed sections that can be recognised as recommendations for sport uniforms in school and sport settings.

1. Uniform preferences

Girls have a strong preference for clothing that helps them perform at their best during school sport and sport outside of school.



Shorts

90% prefer to wear shorts during school sport, **94%** prefer to wear shorts during sport outside of school



T-shirts

94% prefer to wear t-shirts during school sport, **86%** prefer to wear t-shirts during sport outside of school



No skirts

61% prefer not to wear skirts during school sport, **57%** prefer not to wear skirts during sport outside of school

“Netball dresses are breezy which is good, but it’s annoying when you bend over or it’s windy and everyone can see your butt”



Image courtesy of Football Victoria

2. Aspects, features and fit of sport uniforms

When girls are provided with clothing that has been designed with them in mind, they feel less self-conscious and more ready to play.



Uniforms designed for girls

Girls want uniforms specifically **designed for girls** rather than unisex styles



Well-fitted uniforms

Not too tight or loose



Varied styles

Girls with higher body satisfaction are more **comfortable** with tight-fitting uniforms



Material

Four top features: Hides sweat, stretchy, dark colored and plain. Three least preferred features: fashionable; light colored and patterned



Choice

Girls want **different options** for different sports and comfort including wearing leggings or shorts and different options for summer and winter uniforms

“Having navy or black would be nice as it would make me less self-conscious when on my period”

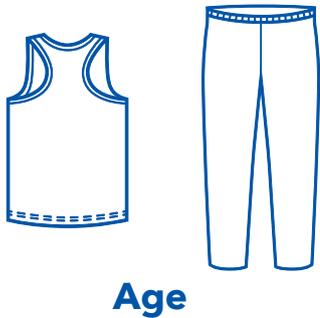
“It would be good if the shorts can have two layers underneath if it has like a bike short attached to the shorts on top so when we are sitting down or in an out of the ordinary position that I don’t feel like you can see my underwear”

“Throughout summer my preference would be to wear bike shorts (preferably high-waist) and a looser t-shirt. As for colder seasons or less physical sport activities I would prefer tracksuit pants with a polo with long sleeves under it, or even a looser t-shirt and the option to wear a looser hoodie or jumper”



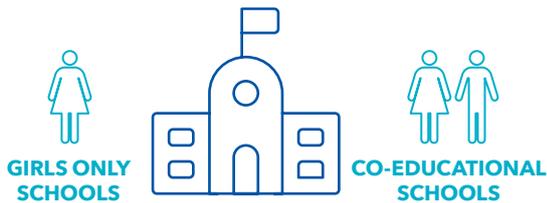
3. Sub-group comparisons

Not all girls are the same and some groups of girls have different uniform preferences. The provision of sport uniform options could be critical for non-active girls to feel comfortable in order to begin engaging in sport.

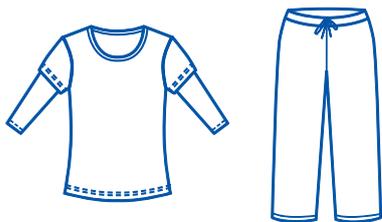


Older girls (15-18 years): happy to wear **whatever is required to play sport** (71%), place more importance on uniforms that make them **feel athletic and ready for sport**, and for sport outside of school prefer **tighter fitting uniforms** than younger girls (12-14 years)

“Please get tracksuits so that we can all feel comfortable in our body, also hoodies/sweatshirts to feel relaxed and not always tight fitted everything”



40% of girls who attend **co-educational schools** prefer sport uniforms that **hide their body**, compared to 33% of girls who attend **girls only schools**



Girls who attend **co-educational schools** show higher preference for **tracksuit bottoms** and **long sleeves under t-shirts** than girls who attend girls only schools



Image courtesy of Basketball Victoria

Activity levels and type



Active girls (those who play sport): enjoy sport 20% more than non-active girls, have higher functional and aesthetic body image satisfaction, and are happier to wear whatever is required to play compared with non-active girls

Girls who are non-active, from culturally diverse backgrounds, and/or identify as LGBTQI+ want a range of sport uniform options to choose what makes them feel comfortable and confident

Girls who played team sports (netball, AFL, basketball) and/or **girls who engaged in lifestyle activities** (jogging, gym, cycling): prefer wearing shorts and singlets, as opposed to shorts and t-shirts

