



CONCORD HIGH SCHOOL P & C ASSOCIATION

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Review of operation of the Concord High School P&C Uniform Shop

Prepared by the Uniform Shop Sub-Committee

Current status

The Concord High School P&C Association has historically operated a uniform shop on the premises of Concord High School. A sub-committee of the P&C, the Uniform Shop Sub-Committee oversees its operation and provides a regular report to the P&C at its meetings. The Uniform Shop operates on a not for profit basis and any funds raised are transferred to Concord High School to be used for the benefit of the school community.

The P&C Association employs the Uniform Shop Manager on a casual basis for approximately 6.5 hours per week but this can vary considerably. The Uniform Shop Manager also relies on the assistance of volunteers during busy periods. The position reports to the Uniform Shop Sub-Committee (USSC). Until recently, the Concord High School P&C Association Treasurer arranged for payment of the Uniform Shop Manager's wages following receipt of hours worked. In April 2019, Concord High School agreed to administer this payment through the Department of Education payroll system.

The Uniform Shop is the only supplier of the school uniform and purchases must be made either in person or through phone or email contact with the Uniform Shop Manager. Recently, VendHQ was implemented in order to provide a more accurate stock management, purchase and receipting process. Prior to this, the Uniform Shop Manager manually processed all purchases and regularly undertook stocktakes with the help of volunteers.

A number of manufacturers supply the various items that comprise the Concord High School Uniform. Focus Uniforms are the major supplier, and manufacture the shirts, shorts, pants, skirts and skorts that are unique to the school. Other suppliers include LW Reid, Cowan and Lewis, Harlequin, OzSport and Leading Promotional Products & Uniforms.

Review of operation by the P&C

An audit of the P&C 2015/16 Financial Accounts identified a number of issues relating to the operation of the uniform shop and made several recommendations that included the purchase of accounting and point of sale software. Following the audit, the P&C Office Bearers decided to

conduct an overall review of the operation of the uniform shop and its future. The review was to consider the following options:

1. The P&C maintain the current retail operation of the uniform shop
2. The P&C outsource the retail operation of the uniform shop to an external provider
3. The P&C cease its involvement in the supply and retail of the school uniform and hand the responsibility for this to the school.

The first stage of the review was to gather information from other high schools in relation to the supply and sale of school uniforms. A parent volunteer conducted a fact-finding mission and presented a report to the P&C in 2017. Five local high schools (Burwood Girls, Sydney Secondary College, Homebush Boys, Strathfield Girls and Dulwich High School) were contacted. Three of the five schools use Lowes to retail their school uniforms. Lowes has a store at Burwood and offers online sales. The other two schools use Pickles which operates a shop both on and off-site, and provides online sales.

The second stage of the review, commenced in September 2018, was to invite suppliers to lodge an expression of interest to manufacture, supply and possibly retail the Concord High School uniform. Seven suppliers responded indicating an interest in retailing the school uniform. Each of the retail options offered either a commission or fundraising benefit for the school community. Four of the seven suppliers also included wholesale pricing. A summary of the expressions of interest received is attached.

In addition to the information received above, the Uniform Shop Sub Committee has considered the following factors as part of this review:

1. Capacity of volunteers

While the uniform shop is managed very capably by the Uniform Shop Manager, considerable support and oversight is provided by the volunteer members of the Uniform Shop Sub Committee. This includes management of staff, finances, stock, volunteers, suppliers and the relationship between the shop and the school community. Members of the USSC are finding it increasingly difficult to devote the time required to manage the business. In peak periods the Committee and the Uniform Shop Manager rely on volunteers from the wider school community and it has been proven recently that few parents and carers are available to provide this assistance.

2. Relocation and refit of the shop

The space allocated for the Uniform Shop was suitable when the student population was less than 700. There are now over 1,300 students at the school and the current space is inadequate. The relocation of the shop to another area on the school grounds has been explored by the USSC and the school. It would require a considerable financial investment and the USSC volunteers would need to spend the time to investigate options, organise the purchase, complete the fit out, ensure compliance with health and safety regulations, and move the stock from the current location.

3. Automation of the Uniform Shop's ordering, stock management and finance systems

The USSC has recently subscribed to a point of sale software system which requires payment of an annual fee. The system is slowly being implemented but it has required significant time and effort by volunteers to upload stock items, prices and client and supplier information, and undertake system testing. Additional software is still needed to provide a fully integrated on line shopping service that is accessible to customers.

4. Exposure to risk

The P&C Office Holders bear the risk and associated liability of operating the uniform shop. There are significant risks relating to finances, insurance, record keeping, workers compensation, taxation, work health and safety, employee management and succession planning. Management of these risks requires a level of expertise and knowledge of regulatory requirements and just as important, the time and capacity to pay due regard to all associated activities, including preparation of BAS reports, payment of GST, oversight of payments, audits, management of stock levels, and monitoring employee hours, performance, wages and health and safety.

5. Fundraising for school

The Uniform Shop has been operated by the P&C primarily to provide a source of fundraising for the school. The continued operation of the shop by the P&C will require a proportion of the funds usually allocated to the school to be used to improve the facilities and systems and services to the school community.

Recommendation of the Uniform Shop Sub Committee

The Uniform Shop Sub Committee is recommending that the P&C hand back the management of the Uniform Shop to the school. In carrying out this review, it has become evident to the USSC that its members feel inadequately equipped and incapable of devoting the time necessary to minimise the level of risk exposure to the P&C.

Concord High School is able to use the resources of the NSW Department of Education to manage the risks discussed above and to oversee contract negotiations with school uniform wholesalers and retailers. In addition, removing the P&C Association as the 'middle man' will mean any funds raised through the sale of the school uniform, either directly by the school or indirectly through a third party retailer, can be directly accumulated by the school.

For the consideration of the Concord High School P&C Association

Prepared by the USSC Members

May 2019