**FADS AND FASHION**

*As teenagers struggle to find their own identity they often look for ways to be seen to be different from their parents and similar to their peers. This often means wearing the same clothes, having similar hairstyles, listening to the same music, and joining whatever current fads and fashions are popular. A major industry has grown around teenagers to cater for these desires, and teenage orientated magazines, radio stations and advertising all promote aspects of teenage culture. This tip sheet gives some suggestions to help you manage some of the pressures you and your teenager may experience as fads and fashions come and go.*

**WHY ARE TEENAGERS ATTRACTED TO FADS AND FASHION?**

Teenagers often want to be seen to be part of the ‘in’ crowd. This often means wearing clothes that are ‘in’; having a certain hair style; using in words; being able to talk about music, TV shows and movies. It may also involve adopting teenage fads, such as tattooing or body piercing. Much of this behaviour seems to set teenagers apart from the older generation. This is a normal part of teenagers search for who they are, but can upset parents and can lead to conflict.

Sometimes problems occur between parents and teenagers because of the shock value of some trends, such as the use of obscene or violent lyrics in pop songs, or the extreme use of body piercing. Teenagers often get status from their peers for acting in ways that parents disapprove of.

**HOW TO DEAL WITH TEENAGE FADS AND FASHION**

* **Praise and attend to behaviour you like**

It is important for parents to praise and give attention to their teenagers to show they approve of who they are and what they are doing.

* **Take an interest in current teenage trends**

Take an interest in what other teenagers are doing, especially those a year or two older. Becoming familiar with trends prevents you from over reacting to your teenager.

* **Consider new fads and fashions carefully**

Like it or not, fads and fashions are an important part of being a teenager.

* **Consider requests by your teenager**

If you teenager requests a new cap, hairstyle, skateboard, bag, nose ring or magazine or insists on going to a particular movie, concert, party or event, avoid immediately saying *No*. Let your teenager know that you are prepared to discuss it, and that the outcome of their request could be *Yes, No* or *Under these conditions ...*

* **Consider the benefits and costs of your teenagers requests**

Will your teenager benefit in any way? How serious are the risks involved? Is there a risk of injury or getting involved in illegal or antisocial behaviour? Is cost a factor and who will pay? Does the request clash with academy rules? Is there a clash with family values or parental beliefs? Will it set a precedent or conflict with what siblings are allowed to do?

Once you are clear about the issues, discuss these calmly with your teenager.

* **Set rules and limits at home**

Parents need to decide what behaviour that is related to particular fads are acceptable in their home. It is one thing to be aware of or familiar with sexual or violent language in current teenage music and fashion, but that does not mean you have to be continually confronted with it at home. Often there will be younger children or the neighbours to consider.

Make a time to sit down with your teenager and explain what behaviour you expect at home. You may also wish to discuss other times and places where the same rules will apply. Often friends parents and academy rules will also discourage certain behaviour, and there may be consequences for ignoring them that need to be considered, such as being banned or suspended.

* **Avoid approving of actions that conflict with Academy rules**

If there is a potential clash with academy rules, it may be necessary to be specific about when and where certain clothes or jewellery may be worn, or what may be taken to school.

**INSERT ACADEMY UNIFORM POLICY**

* **Speak to other parents about their experience**

Teenagers commonly try to persuade or bully parents into giving in to their demands with claims such as *All my friends are ...* and *I’ll be the only one that hasn’t ...* Avoid simply giving in and accidentally rewarding your teenager’s demanding behaviour.

The first thing parents can do is check claims like these. Talk to other parents of teenagers, especially the parents of your teenagers friends.

**KEY STEPS**

* Praise and attend to behaviour you like
* Take an interest in current teenage trends
* Consider new fads and fashions carefully
* Consider requests by your teenager
* Consider the benefits and costs of your teenager’s requests
* Set rules and limits at home
* Consider a behaviour contract to cover costs of more expensive requests
* Avoid approving of actions that conflict with academy rules
* Talk to someone you trust if your teenagers actions offend your beliefs and values
* Speak to other parents about their experience
* Monitor who your teenager spends time with