

UK school bans skirts to prevent male teachers getting distracted

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London: A school headmistress has banned skirts at a secondary school in the UK's West Midlands region to prevent male teachers and pupils getting "distracted".

Rowena Blencowe of Trentham High School in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire took the action because she was fed up with reprimanding girls for showing too much leg and wearing skirts that "barely covered their bottoms".

As a result, all students will now have to wear trousers from September this year. "It's been an increasing problem over the past two years, especially with the older pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11. Girls in year seven, and possibly year eight, tend to abide by the rules, but as they get older the skirts get shorter," Blencowe told the "Daily Mirror".

"Now it's just a constant nag. Girls are coming in with skirts that just cover their bottoms" it's totally inappropriate.

"If a skirt is too short, the student is warned and a length of time is agreed for the issue to be resolved, but girls are still coming in with consistently short skirts," she said.

The headteacher said parents have also been approached and some pupils have been sent home. She added: "We've even had to buy some girls new skirts" which isn't something a school should have to do.

"Girls with the right length skirts are just rolling them up. We tell them in form period to roll them down, but by first break they're back up again."

Blencowe said it is "not pleasant for male members of staff and students either, the girls have to walk up stairs and sit down and it's a complete distraction".

"After a while it stops being a uniform issue and starts becoming a safeguarding issue," she added.

The move comes weeks after a top private school, St. Margaret's School in Hertfordshire, also banned female pupils from wearing short skirts and "too much make-up" in order to keep them "focussed".

"We don't seek publicity" we're not that kind of school. We want to focus on teaching and learning," said deputy head Laurence Morris in response to the media hype around the ban.

"We're a good school making rapid improvements and want to ensure that the students do the best they can do. We don't want to waste our time over the lengths of skirts," she added.

- PTI