

School threatens legal action after Muslim girl told skirt is 'too long'

From the [The Times](#)



The parents of a Muslim girl who refuses to wear a knee-length skirt to school are being threatened with possible court action. Siham Hamud, 12, has worn an ankle-length skirt to school for years but was last month told that it was incorrect school uniform.

Uxbridge High School, in Hillingdon, west London, says that girls should wear black trousers or a black pleated skirt from official uniform suppliers. The family says that the pleated skirt falls above the knee.

Mr Hamud, a father of eight, says that both uniform choices contravene the family's religious beliefs. . . a traditional branch of Islam . . . women should wear only long skirts.

The school sent Mr Hamud and his wife, Salma Yusuf, 44, a letter last month. It said: "Siham's absence is being recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence may result in a fine being issued or legal action being taken against the adults who have parental responsibility or day-to-day care of your child. Legal action can be in the form of a penalty notice or a summons to the magistrates' court. I must ask that you support the school and your daughter by ensuring that she attends school in full school uniform with immediate effect."

Siham (wore) her longer skirt, unaware she was breaking any rules, until she was spoken to by teachers on 1 December. she was sent home to change, but did not return to school. The same thing happened each day for the three weeks of term in December, her family said.

Siham, who is now studying from home due to Covid lockdown restrictions, described feeling bullied for her beliefs.

"It makes me feel left out, because I can't see my friends. They aren't accepting me for my religion and that's wrong," she said. "I feel confused and annoyed that I can't wear what I want for my religion. I hope they'll change their rules so that girls like me wear skirts to school."

The school's principal, Nigel Clemens, said: "This matter is currently subject to examination through the formal school complaints policy. It would therefore not be appropriate to comment further at this time."

School uniform is about uniformity and the school has already accomodated her personal faith preference by allowing a hijab.

50 years ago I was a schoolgirl in a not dissimilar uniform. It was the 60s, the era of swinging London and the miniskirt. Many of my friends (the slim confident ones) were ticked off regularly for skirts being too short. Until one day the PE mistress opined that our wrap-around PE skirts were too long. We protested. How come Miss, that its OK to show our knees while learning to play hockey, but not an hour later when learning about Shakespeare? Context, we were told, and suitability of the occasion. Then in1970 fashion produced the maxi/midi skirt, mid calf or just above the ankle, a look which I felt flattered me and now I was the one in trouble.

That's a health hazard if you trip, my girl.

Miss, I could trip over my shoe laces when I'm barefoot.

As I said, school uniform is about uniformity and, as our old deputy head said, context. This girl is playing the Muslim victim card again. Especially with the thick black tights girls wear today a mid-length skirt is not immodest.