



Media Statement

For Immediate Release

09 January 2019

SCHOOLS URGED TO STICK TO UNIFORM GUIDELINES

The Competition Commission urges schools to adhere to the school uniform guidelines aimed at curbing anti-competitive behaviour at schools.

This is aimed at making sure that schools are compliant with the Competition Act but, most importantly, school uniform becomes reasonable and affordable.

The investigation into anti-competitive behaviour at schools was concluded early last year. The probe established that a number of schools still had exclusive contracts with one supplier. These contracts didn't go through a competitive and transparent bidding process.

Given the number of schools and other considerations, it was felt that schools must focus on the primary function, which is to educate. The Commission was reluctant to drag these schools through protracted litigation process and distract them from their main function.

We engaged all stakeholders including private schools, suppliers, governing bodies, and the government. We agreed on the implementation of school uniform guidelines issued by the government. These include the following:

- School uniform should be as generic as possible such that it is obtainable from as many suppliers possible.
- Exclusivity should be limited to items that the schools regards as necessary to obtain from pre- selected suppliers e.g. badges.
- Schools should follow a competitive bidding process when appointing suppliers.

- Schools should appoint more than one supplier in order to give parents more options.
- The concluded agreements should be of limited duration.

Subsequently, the Commission signed an MOU with FEDSAS, a federation of school governing bodies, which is aimed at educating and encouraging schools to comply with the guidelines.

Further, the Commission engaged private schools like Curro, Advtech and Reddam House amongst others. The private schools response and cooperation was phenomenal. Thus, we have jointly approached the Competition Tribunal and the product of our interaction will be heard on 06 February 2019.

All the parties will make a joint announcement soon after the proceedings on the same day.

[ENDS]

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