

Parents anger at \$730 Armani school uniforms

11th February, 2018



Parents of a Tokyo elementary school are up in arms at being asked to pay \$730 for their child's school uniform. A public elementary school in Tokyo's upmarket Ginza district has decided to adopt new school uniforms designed by the luxury Italian designer Armani. The bespoke uniforms, which include a hat and bag, are priced at over ¥80,000 (\$730) each. Parents are angry at the school's decision and are protesting at what they view as the exorbitant price for a uniform of an eight-year-old child. The school said it wanted a designer uniform that represented the rich area of Ginza. School officials visited top department stores and decided to ask the fashion brand Armani to design the uniform.

The expensive uniform has created such a fuss that it has been discussed in Japan's parliament. One lawmaker said that since the school is public and not private, "a certain price range needs to be considered". Finance Minister Taro Aso said: "Clearly it's expensive. It would be tough if a student could not afford to pay for it." Japan's education minister said steps would be taken to ensure the financial burden placed on parents for uniforms, "would not be excessive". Twitter users said young children are not interested in designer clothes. The school principal said: "With humility, I take the criticism that the explanation has been insufficient and not well-timed. I will go on explaining carefully to those concerned."

Sources: japantimes.co.jp / kyodonews.net / vogue.com

Writing

Fashion should never be part of school uniforms. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

parents / elementary school / school uniform / luxury / designer / eight-year-old / expensive / fuss / price range / tough / education / humility / criticism / explaining

True / False

- A high school in Tokyo wants parents to buy \$730 uniforms. T / F
- The school asked the Italian designer Armani to design the uniforms. T / F
- The uniform's price includes the school bag and a hat. T / F
- School officials went to department stores to look for a uniform. T / F
- The uniform's price has been discussed by Japan's government. T / F
- Japan's Finance Minister said the uniform's price was not expensive. T / F
- The article said a Twitter user said children love designer clothes. T / F
- The school principal has said there is no more talking to be done. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. up in arms | a. excessively high |
| 2. upmarket | b. too much |
| 3. bespoke | c. thought about |
| 4. exorbitant | d. exclusive |
| 5. represented | e. difficult |
| 6. fuss | f. symbolized |
| 7. considered | g. angry |
| 8. tough | h. too little |
| 9. excessive | i. hoo-ha |
| 10. insufficient | j. custom-made |

Discussion – Student A

- What was your school uniform like?
- Why do people wear uniforms?
- What do you think of luxury brands?
- What was the last thing you were up in arms about?
- What do you think of the price of the Ginza school's uniform?
- What does the adjective 'uniform' mean?
- Should the uniform reflect the wealth of the upmarket area of Ginza?
- What advice do you have for the parents?

BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- Parents of a Tokyo elementary school are up
- A public elementary school in Tokyo's
- Parents are angry at the school's
- what they view as
- the fashion
- The expensive uniform has created
- a certain price
- tough if a student could not afford
- the financial burden placed
- I take the criticism that the explanation has
- to pay for it
- brand Armani
- the exorbitant price
- been insufficient
- upmarket Ginza
- on parents
- in arms
- such a fuss
- decision
- range

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Do schoolchildren need to wear uniforms?
- Do you understand the fuss being made?
- What happens if parents cannot afford the expensive uniforms?
- How interested are you in designer fashion?
- What would you do if your child was a student at the school?
- What are the bad things about uniforms?
- What questions would you like to ask the school principal?

Spelling

- Tokyo's upmarket Ginza sictritd
- the ruuxyl Italian designer
- The osepekb uniforms
- angry at the school's oncesdii
- the tnoaxietbr price for a uniform
- School fociliafs
- discussed in Japan's ameirapltn
- It would be tuhgo
- uniforms would not be eixvecses
- I take the smcctiir
- the explanation has been untcsfiiefni
- explaining carefully to those nencrdceo

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. b	5. f
6. i	7. c	8. e	9. b	10. h

Role Play

Role A – School Uniforms

You think school uniforms should never be expensive. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why it is OK for their things to be expensive. Also, tell the others which of these can be very expensive (and why): Internet access, cosmetics or weddings.

Role B – Internet Access

You think Internet access should never be expensive. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why it is OK for their things to be expensive. Also, tell the others which of these can be very expensive (and why): school uniforms, cosmetics or weddings.

Role C – Cosmetics

You think cosmetics should never be expensive. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why it is OK for their things to be expensive. Also, tell the others which of these can be very expensive (and why): Internet access, school uniforms or weddings.

Role D – Weddings

You think weddings should never be expensive. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why it is OK for their things to be expensive. Also, tell the others which of these can be very expensive (and why): Internet access, cosmetics or school uniforms.

Speaking – Expensive

Rank these with your partner. Put the things that shouldn't be expensive at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- cosmetics
- weddings
- pets
- education
- school uniforms
- Internet access
- housing
- chocolate

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.