

The battle of the hemlines: Teens stick up for short skirts

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Monday, June 22nd 2009, 4:00 AM

Warned that their skirts were too short to wear to school, more than 100 British high school students decided they'd rather drop out for a day than drop their hemlines.

Last week, the students at [Upton-by-Chester School](#) in Chesire, [England](#), organized a walkout on [Facebook](#), reports the [London Daily Mail](#), and proceeded to hold a "peaceful protest."

At issue were the teensy skirts that head teacher [Jane Holland](#) said made male teachers walking behind the girls confused over "where to look." [Holland](#) added that "despite repeated warnings, skirt lengths have got even more ridiculous."

The students, rather than skirt the issue, aired their grievances in the school dining room as teachers listened, according to The Daily Mail, and then proceeded to hold their protest.

So what should win out -- fashion, or old-fashioned values?

"Part of what's going on here is teen rebellion, or a way to make their own voice be heard," says [Corinne Gregory](#), founder and president of Social Smarts. "But part of the problem is that our young people are growing up increasingly quickly, and the message of sex and hormones is no longer just a teen message and a teen issue. Little girls as young as seven, eight and nine are dressing up to look like little [Britney Spears](#) and there's no sense of boundaries or propriety."

Teenagers are struggling to become adults, says [Sarah Burningham](#), author of "How to Raise Your Parents" and "Boyology" ([Chronicle Books](#)), and they feel that the one thing they have control over is their body.

"Fashion is all part of their personality and it's an easy way for a teen to say, I am in charge of myself," Burningham explains. "That said, there's definitely a generational difference when it comes to fashion."

In the case of the British students, the head teacher noted, "I have issued warnings that if skirt lengths aren't adhered to there will be a move toward trousers for everyone," according to the Daily Mail. "We have handed out questionnaires and invited students to be part of making decisions.

Burningham advises parents to pick their battles when it comes to a teen's choice of clothing. "You have to decide how short is too short for you and of course it will be different for every family," she says. "Parents want to protect their children. But remember that one short skirt does not make your daughter a slut."

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