

Pupils under pressure to buy brands

Children who cannot afford to buy the latest brands and fashions face bullying and ridicule by their peers*, teachers warned yesterday.

Research from the teaching union, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, says children are under heavy pressure to buy certain brands and products to fit in with their peer group.

Almost half of the teachers questioned in the research said young people who cannot afford the fashionable items owned by their friends have been isolated or bullied as a result. The research also warned of a "significant" rise in the influence of advertising and marketing on children.

Dr Mary Bousted, ATL general secretary said: "Children feel under immense pressure to look right and having the key brands is part of that". [...]

"Advertising and marketing have made our society increasingly image-conscious and our children are suffering the consequences. Schools and colleges should be places where all children feel equal, but it is virtually impossible for schools to protect their pupils from the harsher aspects of these commercial influences" Dr Bousted said.

The poll found more than eight in ten teachers (85 % of those questioned) believe possession of fashionable goods is important to their pupils, with 93 % saying brands are the top influence on what children buy, followed by friends and logos.

Almost all of the teachers questioned said they believe advertising directly targets children and young people.

Andy Cranham, a teacher at City of Bristol College said: "The need to belong in groups is paramount* to young learners and exclusion is something they see as the end of the world".

Natasha Gilbert, www.theguardian.com, Monday 11, August 2008.

their peers : the other pupils at school.

paramount : very important.

QUESTIONS ON THE DOCUMENT

1. Choose the right answer.

a. What sort of pupils are ridiculed? Justify your answer.

- intellectuals;
- fashion victims;
- pupils who don't have the money to buy brands.

b. Who identified this phenomenon as a problem?

2. True or false? Justify your answers by quoting from the text.

- a. Schools can protect all pupils from marketing.
- b. Most schoolchildren want to be like everybody else.

3. a. According to the journalist, what factors incite pupils to buy certain products ?(give 3 different elements)

b. What are the consequences for the pupils who don't conform?