**Cambridge English B for the IB Diploma: Teacher resource**

**Audio scripts**

**Audio track 17**

[Paper 2 Standard level Text B]

**Text B**

You are going to listen to a radio show in which the host interviews a school principal about her school’s dress code.

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**Host:** Welcome back to today’s debate on Radio One. It’s that time of year again: Back to School. And our next debate stems from an interesting situation that happened in Victoria last week. Two girls of South Sudanese origin went to school with a hairstyle that their school deemed inappropriate. The school said that the hairstyles did not fit with the school’s dress code. But now the girls and their parents have challenged the school, claiming that their ethnic identity is in fact being disrespected by this decision. We made a few calls to hear both sides of the debate and find out what’s really going on.

Here is a recording of a conversation I had earlier with the school’s principal.

**Principal:** Yes, so, the problem here is that these girls are claiming to have a unique right, which other students do not enjoy. In other words they don’t think the rules apply to them. Look, our dress code has a purpose: it’s designed to hide social class, ethnic background and any other differences that get in the way of learning. It’s there to *protect* them. But the girls insist on forcing their ethnicity and cultural practices on others, which is in fact *harming* others.

**Host:** Can we speak specifically about the kind of hairstyle that the girls wore to school last week? I believe they were wearing a style called ‘cornrows’, which is common among girls of African descent.

**Principal:** Well yes, we can define cornrows here if you’d like. I’ve only just learned about them myself. They are very tight braids close to the scalp. But they’re worn by rappers and hoodlums, you see. And that’s a culture with which our school cannot be associated.

**Host:** But certainly you’re not suggesting that only rappers and hoodlums wear cornrows.

**Principal:** Look, cornrows are not a hairstyle that is found in our dress code.

**Host:** Ah yes, if we can talk about that dress code, I understand your school has an illustrated guide on how students should wear their hair. Are there any suggested hairstyles for girls of African descent? Are there any African models in the guide?

**Principal:** That’s beside the point. The point is, our school does not encourage expression of race or ethnicity, because we aim to uphold our school’s *own* cultural standards and heritage. Dress code is dress code, put quite simply.

**Host:** And you said earlier that these girls are forcing their ethnicity and cultural practices on others. I assume you mean that they are braiding other girls’ hair without their permission?

**Principal:** No. But they were flaunting their hairstyle, which encourages others to disregard the rules. I suppose it is like the broken-window theory, in case you’re familiar with that.

**Host:** No, I’m not. Can you explain it to me?

**Principal:** You see, it only takes one broken window to encourage others to pick up stones and vandalise the entire building. And our dress code is, well... it’s like a building, which has stood for decades, and it will not be brought down by these two recalcitrant girls. If we allow them these hairstyles, we will have boys wearing caps and loosening their ties, which is already a problem.

**Host:** Can I ask if the girls are also loosening their ties?

**Principals:** Oh, well, the girls at our school do not have ties as part of their uniform.

**Host:** You mean the girls and boys wear *different* uniforms?

**Principal:** Yes this is the case.

**Host:** Thank you for your time.