

Students fall victim to Korea tension



BBC ONLINE

Students in South Korea could start the new school year in casual attire after the shutdown of a jointly-run industrial zone in the North left the country with a shortage of uniforms.

The academic year begins on 2 March and the weeks leading up to it are traditionally one of the busiest times for uniform suppliers.

But manufacturers based at the Kaesong Industrial Complex say they had to abandon thousands of uniforms when North Korea ordered all South Korean workers to leave the site earlier this month.

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The South had earlier announced the suspension of its operations at the complex in response to North Korea's rocket launch and nuclear test.

One clothing company tells The Korea Times that it left behind more than 80,000 school uniforms, and that several other manufacturers had to do the same.

Suppliers are now working overtime to catch up, the paper says.

South Korea's education ministry acknowledges that there are likely to be delays, and has told schools to relax their dress codes until there are enough uniforms to go around.

But while an extended non-uniform day might please some students, it seems parents aren't happy.

One tells the paper that new clothes are an important part of the new school year, adding: "This nonsense is negatively affecting children."