



## Flammable jumpers

In recent months we have had several reports of incidents in which a pupil's jumper has caught fire. The details are much the same in each case. The pupil was wearing a cotton jumper, of a type commonly bought as a part of a school uniform from a large reputable chain store. When the pupil was standing near to a Bunsen burner (50 cm?), flames were seen to spread over the surface of the jumper. These were easily extinguished, sometimes spontaneously, and none of the pupils suffered any injury. Nor, indeed was the jumper damaged.

We have contacted the supplier, and believe that the problem is caused by fluff which builds up on the surface over a period of time. This ignites easily, but the intensity of the flame is small, and unlikely to burn the wearer or ignite other clothing. The jumper carries a label "Keep Away From Fire", although, as it is not nightwear, there is no statutory obligation for it to do so, and similar garments from other suppliers may not be so labelled.

It is unlikely that serious injury will result from incidents involving these jumpers. However, teachers may wish to warn their classes of the possibility, and emphasise the importance of not panicking. They may wish also to consider the value of getting pupils to wear laboratory coats or other protective clothing (Dad's old shirt?) when it is practicable to do so.