



Uniform Policy

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1.0 Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing magical learning experiences for all pupils and this permeates everything we do. We have the highest expectations which lead to outstanding academic achievement, exemplary behaviour and superb levels of participation in extra-curricular activities. We believe that every pupil represents their school, and behaving well and looking smart, both in and on the way to school, are of the utmost importance. We are fiercely proud of our reputation in our local communities, and a pupil's school uniform is an essential part of maintaining that status as it:

- Supports excellent behaviour, good discipline and etiquette
- Protects children from social pressures to dress in a certain way
- Promotes fairness and equality for all
- Ensures pupils from all cultures and backgrounds feel welcome
- Sets an appropriate tone for education, supporting effective teaching, learning and safeguarding
- Instils pride in our identity and a sense of belonging

For the purposes of this policy and the uniform requirements of each of our schools, **“uniform”** includes the following elements of pupils' appearance:

- Clothing, including the school uniform itself, variations of the school uniform such as PE kits, and other clothing worn at school, e.g. non-uniform.
- Hairstyles and headwear.
- Jewellery and other accessories.
- Cosmetics such as makeup and nail polish.

We appreciate the overwhelming support given to us by pupils, parents and carers in adhering to our uniform policy and each of our school's individual uniform requirements

2.0 Uniform Requirements

Each of our schools has their own uniform which represents the heritage and unique nature of the school, whilst also helping to create a strong sense of identity and belonging for our pupils and the communities we serve. What is consistent however, is the expectation that all pupils will adhere to the uniform requirements in each of our schools. Details of the uniform requirements will be clearly published on each school website and in regular communications to families.

We would strongly advise that all belongings are clearly labelled with the pupil's name

The Together Learning Trust and our schools reserve the right to determine what constitutes appropriate uniform

*To make things simple, we will include diagrams on each individual school website to explain exactly what is and is NOT acceptable. These diagrams cannot cover every variation and so if you are in any doubt as to what may or may not be acceptable please contact your school and check **BEFORE you buy.***

Certain shops will stock items as part of their 'School Uniform' section that does not necessarily mean it complies with our policy and requirements.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The local governing committee is responsible for:

- Establishing, in consultation with the Headteacher and school community, a practical and smart school uniform that accurately reflects the school's vision and values.
- Ensuring that the school's uniform is accessible and inclusive, and does not disadvantage any pupil by virtue of their protected characteristics or socio-economic status.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of parents, pupils and the wider school community regarding changes to the school's uniform.
- Ensuring that the school's uniform is accessible and affordable.
- Demonstrating how best value for money has been achieved in the uniform policy.
- Ensuring compliance with the DfE's 'Cost of school uniforms' guidance.
- Processing and approving all eligible School Uniform Assistance Application Forms.

3.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Enforcing the school's uniform policy and requirements on a day-to-day basis.
- Ensuring that staff understand the school's uniform requirements and what to do if a pupil is in breach of the policy.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of the school community in regard to the school's uniform and making appropriate recommendations to the local governing committee.
- Providing pupils with an exemption letter as appropriate, e.g. for a pupil who has a broken arm and requires a loose-fitting top. *Any such instances will be judged on a case by case basis and may require a medical exemption note. The expectation would be that a pupil returns to full school uniform at the earliest opportunity.*

3.3 Staff members are responsible for:

- Ensuring that pupils dress in accordance with the school's uniform requirements at all times.
- Disciplining pupils who are in breach of this policy and the school's uniform requirements.
- Ensuring that pupils understand why having a consistent and practical school uniform is important, e.g. school identity.

3.4 Parents are responsible for:

- Providing their children with the correct school uniform as detailed in this policy and the school's uniform requirements.
- Informing the Headteacher if their child requires a more relaxed uniform for a period of time, including why.
- Ensuring that their child's uniform is clean, presentable and the correct size.

3.5 Pupils are responsible for:

- Wearing the correct uniform at all times, unless the Headteacher has granted an exemption.
- Looking after their uniform as appropriate.
- Understanding and respecting why a school uniform is important to the school, e.g. school identity and community.

4.0 Cost Principles

The Together Learning Trust is committed to ensuring that its schools uniform is affordable and accessible to all pupils, and does not place an unreasonable financial burden on parents/carers.

The Together Learning Trust and each of our schools will develop its uniform policy and requirements in relation to the following starting principles:

- We will seek to ensure that the uniform is affordable. In so doing, the school will consider the total cost of school uniforms, taking into account all items of uniform or clothing parents will need to provide while their child is at the school.
- We will seek to keep the use of branded items to a minimum.
- We will seek to ensure that uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money, including the quality and durability of the garment.
- We will seek to ensure that second-hand uniforms are available for parents to acquire. Information on second-hand uniform is available by contacting your child's school.

In accordance with the 'School Admissions Code', the Headteacher will ensure that the school's uniform requirements does not discourage parents from applying for a place for their child.

We will assess the overall cost implications of its uniform regularly, including prior to making any changes to the school uniform. When evaluating whether costs are reasonable and proportionate, the school will take into account the opinions and situations of:

- Economically disadvantaged parents.
- Parents with multiple children who are, or will be in the future, pupils at the school.
- Parents of younger children, as they are likely to grow quickly and require new sets of uniform more frequently.
- Parents of pupils with protected characteristics that may impact their ability to access the uniform due to costs.
- CLA and PCLA.

We will evaluate the cost of uniform based on the overall collection of uniform items that parents would need to purchase for a pupil, rather than on the cost effectiveness of individual items; this will include consideration of the fact that parents will need to purchase multiples of certain items, e.g. shirts and socks, to ensure their child can come to school in clean uniform every day.

We will keep variations in school uniform for different groups of pupils, e.g. year group-specific items, to a minimum where possible to ensure that pupils can get the most wear out of their uniform and that parents can pass some items down to younger siblings.

We keep branded uniform items to a minimal level that is reasonable for all members of the school community. The school defines a branded uniform item as any item of clothing that cannot be purchased at a range of retailers, including by virtue of logos, colours, design and fabrics. Where any of our schools decides to require an item of branded clothing, it will conduct an assessment to ensure prices are kept as low as possible.

The school is committed to meeting the DfE's recommendations on costs and value for money. Every care is taken to ensure that our uniforms are affordable for all current and prospective pupils, and that the best value for money is secured through reputable suppliers.

Our schools work with multiple suppliers to obtain the best value for money possible. Any savings negotiated are passed to parents where possible and does not enter into exclusive single supplier contracts or cash-back arrangements.

5.0 Equality Principles

The Together Learning Trust takes its legal obligation to avoid unlawfully discriminating against any pupil very seriously.

In line with the above, we will aim to ensure that our uniform policy, along with each of our school's uniform requirements are as inclusive as possible so that all pupils can access a school uniform which is comfortable, suitable for their needs, while avoiding any direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics or socio-economic status.

Our schools will ensure that parents and pupils are consulted over any significant changes to school uniform, and that, where appropriate and with pupils' consent, views and advice are sought specifically from pupils, and parents of pupils, who:

- Are transgender or non-binary.
- Are of a religious or cultural background that has specific dress requirements.
- Have SEND and/or sensory needs.

Parents' concerns and requests regarding school uniform and amendments to it are handled on a case-by-case basis by the headteacher and local governing committee, and always in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

Information on how the school ensures its uniform policy does not discriminate against pupils with specific protected characteristics is outlined below.

5.1 Gender

To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils of a certain gender, our schools will ensure that the cost of uniform is as equal in price as possible across items for all genders.

This includes:

- Adhering to the procedures laid out in the 'Cost principles' section of this policy.
- Not directly requiring pupils of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by requiring female pupils to buy both trousers and skirts.
- Not indirectly requiring pupils of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by offering football in PE to only male pupils and requiring they buy football boots to participate.
- Not holding pupils of different genders to different uniform standards, e.g. by banning certain hairstyles for only one gender.

Our schools will implement a gender-neutral uniform, meaning that pupils will not be required to wear specific items based on their gender, and may wear any of the uniform items listed on the 'school uniform' section of their individual website, regardless of the legal sex recorded on the school's records. Transgender pupils are supported to access the uniform that best reflects their gender expression.

5.2 Religion and belief

To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils of a certain religion, belief or culture, the school will ensure that there is flexibility to allow pupils to present themselves in a way that adheres to their dress requirements as far as possible, within the school's uniform requirements.

The school will endeavour to meet all requests for amendments to the uniform for these purposes; however, the needs and rights of individual pupils will be weighed against any health and safety concerns appropriate to the circumstances, e.g. if safety headgear needs to be worn.

5.3 Race

To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils of a certain race, our schools will ensure that its uniform requirements do not constitute unlawful indirect discrimination through blanket rules. This includes:

- Not banning hairstyles related to a pupil's ethnic origin, e.g. natural Afro hairstyles.
- Not banning hairstyles worn because of cultural, family and social customs, e.g. cornrows.
- Not banning head coverings related to a pupil's culture or ethnic origin, e.g. African heritage head wraps.

The school will follow the good practice guidance provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission on 'Preventing hair discrimination in schools'.

5.4 SEND and medical conditions

To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils with SEND or medical conditions, the school will ensure its uniform requirements take into account the needs of these pupils. This includes:

- Ensuring the school uniform uses appropriate fabrics and avoids intricate buttons or hard seams.
- Allowing variations to the standard uniform for pupils whose medical conditions may impact how they dress, e.g. pupils with casts who require loose-fitting clothing or pupils with hair loss-related conditions who wish to wear head coverings.

Where the needs of these pupils cannot be met in the standard uniform requirements, individual adaptations to the uniform will be considered and permitted where appropriate. Adaptations will be considered on a case by case basis and medical evidence may be required. In most cases, the expectation is that pupils will return to full school uniform at the earliest opportunity.

The school will ensure that it works with a supplier that acts in accordance with the school's values and principles on equality and inclusion.

6.0 Non-Compliance

Staff members are permitted to discipline pupils for breaching this policy and the uniform requirements of the individual school, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

The Headteacher, or a person authorised by the Headteacher, is permitted to ask a pupil to briefly go home to remedy breaches to the school's uniform. When deciding whether to allow a pupil to return home, the school considers the pupil's age and vulnerability, the length of time it will take, and the availability of the pupil's parents.

Where a pupil has been sent home to rectify uniform breaches, the absence is recorded as 'authorised'.

If a pupil repeatedly breaches uniform rules, or takes longer than necessary to rectify the absence, the absence is counted as 'unauthorised'.

Parents will be notified in all cases.

Furthermore, each school holds a stock of spare uniform. Staff may reasonably expect pupils without their full school uniform to borrow items for the day to ensure their compliance. This stock of uniform is kept clean and is in a suitable condition.

7.0 Uniform Assistance

Our schools support vulnerable families in meeting the costs of uniforms. School uniform assistance can be provided via a voucher that can be spent on school clothing. The budget for the school uniform assistance scheme comes from pupil premium funds. If a family is subject to a change in circumstances and/or would like to request additional support with meeting the cost of uniform, they are strongly advised to contact their child's school.

8.0 Challenges and Complaints

Our schools will endeavour to resolve all uniform complaints and challenges locally and informally, in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The school will refer individuals who wish to complain to the Complaints Procedures Policy and request that they follow the procedures outlined therein.

When a complaint is received, the school will work with the complainant to arrive at a mutually acceptable outcome.

Our schools have an agreed procedure in place with its uniform supplier to deal with complaints about the supply and quality of uniforms.

In considering a complaint, parents should be aware that staff can sanction pupils for breaching the school's rules and requirements on appearance or uniform. We expect this to be carried out in accordance with the school's published behaviour policy. Our schools aim to deal with pupil non-compliance in a proportionate and fair way and with the support of parents/carers.

9.0 Scope and Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Act 2021
- DfE (2021) 'Cost of school uniforms'
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2021) 'School uniforms'
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022) 'Preventing hair discrimination in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Pupil Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Tendering and Procurement Policy

10.0 Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed routinely by the Together Learning Trust, the next planned review is detailed on the front cover of this policy. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff, pupils, families and the governing body.