



**St Cuthbert's
Catholic High School**

Live life in all its fullness

School Uniform Policy 2023 - 2024

Person responsible for Policy:	Business Leader/Senior Leadership Team
Committee responsible for Policy:	Finance, HR & Premises
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Statement of intent

St Cuthbert's Catholic High School believes that a consistent school uniform policy is vital to promote the ethos of the school and provide a sense of belonging and identity for all students, regardless of their protected characteristics or socio-economic circumstances.

For the purposes of this policy, “**uniform**” includes the following elements of students' 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.

This policy lays out the measures the school has taken to ensure a consistent, fair and inclusive uniform policy, and to implement a uniform that reflects the needs of all students, and is affordable and the best value for money for the school and students' families.

We believe that students learn most effectively and achieve their best outcomes when they are comfortable, able to be themselves, and dressed in such a way that sets an appropriate tone for education.

St Cuthbert's Vision

'A vibrant community uniquely created by God, which embraces everyone, especially those in need and celebrates difference. Enabled by a staff dedicated to our Catholic ethos and a culture of excellence, our young people will be inspired to know more, and be more.'

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance 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
- Student Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- LGBTQ+ Policy
- Tendering and Procurement Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board 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, inclusive, and does not disadvantage any student because of their protected characteristics or socio-economic status.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of parents, students and the wider school community regarding changes to the school's uniform.
- Ensuring that the school's uniform is accessible and affordable.
- Demonstrating in this policy how best value for money has been achieved.
- Ensuring compliance with the DfE's '[Cost of school uniforms](#)' guidance.
- Processing and approving all eligible School Uniform Assistance Application Forms.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Enforcing the school's uniform rules on a day-to-day basis.
- Ensuring that teachers understand this policy and what to do if a student 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 governing board.
- Providing students with an exemption letter as appropriate, e.g. for a student who has a broken arm and requires a loose-fitting shirt.

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that students dress in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Where appropriate to their role, disciplining students who are in breach of this policy.
- Ensuring that students understand why having a consistent and practical school uniform is important, e.g. school identity.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing their children with the correct school uniform as detailed in this policy.
- Informing the headteacher if their child requires an exemption to the uniform rules for a period of time, with a reason why.
- Ensuring that their child's uniform is clean, presentable and the correct size.

Students 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.

3. Cost principles

The school will ensure that its school uniform is affordable and accessible to all students, and does not place an unreasonable financial burden on parents.

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

The school will assess the overall cost implications of its uniform policy 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, students at the school.
- Parents of younger children, as they are likely to grow quickly and require new sets of uniform more frequently.
- Parents of students with protected characteristics that may impact their ability to access the uniform.
- LAC and PLAC.

The school will evaluate the cost of its uniform based on the overall collection of uniform items that parents would need to purchase for a student, 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.

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

The school will 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, e.g. supermarkets, due to the item's logo, colour, design, fabric or other

unique element. Where the school requires an item of branded clothing, it will assess how prices can be kept as low as possible and put measures in place to facilitate this. This may include:

- Offering sew- or iron-on logo patches for blazers and jumpers that can be bought at non-specialist retailers, instead of requiring specific branded jumpers.
- Ensuring branded items are longer-lasting and unlikely to be worn out quickly, e.g. ties.
- Making donated second-hand uniform available for purchase at a lower price.

The school will meet the DfE's requirements and recommendations on costs and value for money. Care will be taken to ensure that school uniform is affordable for all current and prospective students, and that the best value for money is secured through reputable suppliers.

The school will work with multiple suppliers to obtain the best value for money possible. Any savings negotiated will be passed to parents where possible. The school will not enter into exclusive single-supplier contracts or cash-back arrangements. More information on supplier processes can be found in the '[School uniform supplier](#)' section of this policy.

The school will not make frequent changes to uniform requirements and will take the views of parents and students into account when considering any changes.

4. Equality principles

The school takes its legal obligation to avoid unlawfully discriminating against any protected characteristic very seriously. In line with this, the school will aim to ensure that its uniform policy is as inclusive as possible so that all students can access a school uniform which is comfortable, suitable for their needs, and reflects who they are, while avoiding any direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics or socio-economic status.

The school will ensure that parents and students are consulted over any changes to school uniform, and that, where appropriate and with students' consent, views and advice are sought specifically from students, and parents of students, 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 governing board, and always in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

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

Gender

To avoid disproportionately impacting students of a certain gender, the school 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 students of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by requiring female students to buy both trousers and skirts.

- Not indirectly requiring students of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by offering football in PE to only male students and requiring they buy football boots to participate.
- Not holding students of different genders to different uniform standards, e.g. by banning certain hairstyles for only one gender.

The school will implement a gender-neutral uniform, meaning that students will not be required to wear specific items based on their gender, and may wear any of the uniform items listed in the '[School uniform](#)' section of this policy regardless of the legal sex recorded on the school's records. Transgender students are supported to access the uniform that best reflects their gender expression in line with the LGBTQ+ Policy.

Religion and belief

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

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

Race

To avoid disproportionately impacting students of a certain race, the school will ensure that its uniform policy does not constitute unlawful indirect discrimination through blanket rules. This includes:

- Not banning hairstyles related to a student'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 student'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](#)'.

SEND and medical conditions

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

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

Where the needs of these students cannot be met in the standard uniform policy, individual adaptations to the uniform will be considered and permitted wherever possible.

5. Complaints and challenges

The school 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.

6. School uniform supplier

The school's current school uniform suppliers are.

Whittakers School Wear

38 Bridge Street

St Helens

WA10 1NW

Telephone 01744 451812

Jay Max Uniform

91-93 Church Street

St Helens

WA10 1AJ

Telephone 01744 752003

Uniform assistance

This will be assessed on a case by case basis.

7. Non-compliance

Staff will be permitted to discipline students for breaching this policy, where relevant to their role, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher, or a person authorised by the headteacher, will be permitted to ask a student to briefly go home to remedy breaches to the school's uniform. When deciding whether to allow a student to return home, the member of staff will consider the student's age and vulnerability, the length of time it will take, and the availability of the student's parents. A parent will always be contacted before sending the student home – if contact with the student's parent cannot be made, the student will remain in school.

Where a student has been sent home to rectify uniform breaches, the absence will be recorded as 'authorised'. If a student repeatedly breaches uniform rules, or takes longer than necessary to rectify the absence, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

8. School uniform

Clothing

The school uniform is as follows:

First impressions are always very important, so it is vital that students wear the correct uniform.

Blazer	Maroon with school badge
Jumper	Maroon V-Neck jumper with the new school badge (optional item)
Tie	This year's Year 7 tie is Green stripe Other Year Groups: Year 8: Yellow, Year 9:Blue, Year 10: Red and Year 11: bespoke tie (school to supply)
Skirt/Pinafore	Black , knee length pleated skirt or Black, square-necked box pleated pinafore with black tights or white socks
Trousers	Black , tailored trousers only with black socks
Shirt	Plain White only
Shoes	Plain , polishable Black footwear of a flat and conventional design
Outdoor coats	Black only

From September 2022, we will have a new PE kit available for our Year 7 students and other students who have outgrown their current kits.

Sports Top	Black polo neck with maroon stripes and school Cs as the badge
Hoodie	Black hoodie with school Cs as the badge (only to be worn in PE lessons)
Leggings/Joggers/Short	Plain Black leggings, joggers or shorts to be worn

Students are expected to bring their full kit to every lesson. If they do not bring their own kit, they will be expected to borrow items of kit from our clean, spare kit.

Additional Important Information

- Hair to be worn in a reasonable style and of a natural colour (no extreme hair styles are allowed, no lines, no shapes patterns)
- Acceptable jewellery - one pair of ear studs worn in the ears and a wrist watch
- Make up is not permitted (this includes nail varnish and false nails)
- Blazers to be worn at all times
- No outdoor coats to be worn in the building
- No hoods, of any description, to be worn on the school premises

9. Adverse weather

All students will be advised to wear weather-appropriate clothing.

For hot temperatures, students will be advised not to wear any jumpers or blazers during heatwaves. If outside during break times, students not wearing sun-safe clothing will be advised to stay in an area protected from the sun.

10. Labelling

Parents will be advised to ensure that all students' clothing and footwear is clearly labelled with their name and year group.

Any lost clothing will be taken into the school office.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the chair of governors and the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **May 2024**