

Midlothian School Uniform and Clothing Guidance for Schools

Legal context

School uniform and clothing is the items of clothing and footwear expected to be worn during the school day. This may include traditional items of uniform; clothing for PE; clothing for outdoor learning and clothing worn to attend trips activities or occasions during or beyond the school day.

Although there is no legal requirement for pupils to wear uniform when attending school in Scotland, all Midlothian schools are expected to have a uniform policy, collaboratively developed and reflective of the local context. There are wide range of well-established reasons for and benefits of school uniform such as supporting pupils to feel connected, reducing stigma and support safeguarding, as well as contributing to the UNCRC right to dignity, participation, social justice and belonging.

Guidance

On 12 September 2024 the Scottish Government published non-statutory Guidance on school uniform with the overarching ambition to ensure pupil comfort, happiness and freedom to learn alongside removing barriers to participation.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/school-uniform-clothing-guidance-schools-education-authorities/>

Guidance was also produced for children and young people and for parents and carers.

The guidance sets out key principles that schools should consider when developing, implementing and reviewing their school uniform policy.

School uniform and clothing policies should:

- *be informed by the views of pupils*
- *be informed by the views of parents, carers, teachers and school staff*
- *minimise the cost of school uniform and clothing for families*
- *consider and commit to fair and environmentally sustainable approaches*
- *support an inclusive, welcoming and equitable school culture*
- *promote equality, including recognising specific matters relating to religion and belief, race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity*
- *eliminate unnecessary barriers to participation and engagement of pupils in school education*
- *apply to all school clothing, including PE and senior phase*
- *recognise the need for practicality, including in relation to weather and seasonal needs*
- *recognise and build upon current good practice in schools*
- *support and encourage pupils to observe school uniform and clothing policies, while recognising their individual needs, circumstances and identity*
- *continue the position of no legal requirement upon pupils to wear school uniform*

Cost

School branded/ embroidered items of school uniform from specialist suppliers are generally the most expensive options for parents and carers. The national guidance provides clear statements about the actions that schools and local authorities should try to take to minimise

the cost of uniforms. is explicit about the need for a flexible policy that limits the costs for parents and carers, this includes

- Adopt policies that mean all items needed for the year, plus a reasonable number of spares or replacements, can be bought within the amount provided by the School Clothing Grant.
- Include generic items that can be bought from a range of suppliers
- Use generic colours that are easily available from a range of suppliers
- Branded items of uniform and blazers should not be compulsory, nor promoted or encouraged by schools

Midlothian position

Midlothian Council is committed to reducing the cost of the school day reducing inequality. On 25 June 2024 a motion was heard at Council regarding school uniform and the negative impact that expensive branded items were having on some Midlothian families. The motion was passed and the Executive Director of Children, Young People & Partnerships was asked to notify schools that unbranded uniform should be adopted.

Throughout the autumn term the Parent & Learner Liaison Officer (PLLO) consulted with pupils, parents and school leaders on school uniform policy. This engagement confirmed that there are a range of approaches to school uniform across Midlothian and strong opinions about key elements that schools wish to retain.

In response to this Midlothian Council has developed a set of expectations for schools that comply with national expectations but allows for local decision making.

Midlothian Directive:

- All schools should have a school uniform and clothing policy, developed with pupils, parents, and staff, which meets the needs of their pupils and wider school community.
- The school policy must reflect national policy in terms of affordability, equality, diversity & inclusion and sustainability.
- Schools should ensure their uniform policy is clear and accessible to pupils, parents and carers, and available on the school website and handbook.
- Schools will support families with access to pre-loved uniform and should promote the school clothing grant.
- Schools should carefully consider their approach to special occasions, school trips and dress-down days and mitigate any barriers to participation.
- Schools should limit the frequency of changes to uniform policy and changes must be agreed through consultation and implemented over a period of time.