



Orsett Heath Academy



SOUTH WEST ESSEX
COMMUNITY EDUCATION TRUST

Policy Name	School Uniform Policy
Written by	Mr L Taylor, Deputy Headteacher
Approved by	Head of School
Date Approved	September 2023
To be Reviewed by	September 2024

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Statement of intent

Orsett Heath Academy 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 pupils, regardless of their protected characteristics or socio-economic circumstances.

For the purposes of this policy, **“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.

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 pupils, is affordable, and provides the best value for money for both the school and pupils’ families.

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

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
- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Tendering and Procurement Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust board is responsible for:

- Establishing, in consultation with the Head of School 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 pupil because 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 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 Head of School 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 pupil is in breach of the policy.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of the school community regarding the school's uniform and making appropriate recommendations to the Trust board.

- Providing pupils with an exemption letter as appropriate, e.g., for a pupil who has a broken arm and requires a loose-fitting shirt.

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that pupils dress in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Where appropriate to their role, disciplining pupils who are in breach of this policy.
- Ensuring that pupils 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 Head of School if their child requires an exemption to the uniform rules for a period, with a reason why.
- Ensuring that their child's uniform is clean, presentable and the correct size.

Pupils are responsible for:

- always wearing the correct uniform unless the Head of School 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 pupils and does not place an unreasonable financial burden on parents.

In accordance with the 'School Admissions Code', the Head of School 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 consider 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.
- 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 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.

The school will keep variations in school uniform for different groups of pupils, e.g. year group-specific items or house colours, to a minimum to ensure that pupils 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:

- 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 pupils, 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 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 pupils 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 pupils can access a school uniform which is comfortable, suitable for their needs, and reflects who they are, while avoiding any direct or indirect discrimination based on protected characteristics or socio-economic status.

The school will ensure that parents and pupils are consulted over any 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.

To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils 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 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](#)'.

SEND and medical conditions.

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

- Ensuring the school uniform uses soft, stretchy 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 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 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:

- [Uniform Wise](#) - 38-40 High Street, Stanford Le Hope, SS17 0HQ.
- [Snappy School Wear](#) - Online only

Both of our school suppliers hold regular pop-up shops in school, to find out dates for these please contact the main office on 01375 486000.

The Trust board will ensure that a written contract is in place with the supplier for branded items. The school will tender the uniform contract every **five years**, whether changes to the uniform are made or not, in line with the Tendering and Procurement Policy.

The Trust board will be able to demonstrate how uniform is procured at the best value for money. The Head Teacher will work to ensure that the items are procured as cheaply as possible without compromising on the quality, e.g., by requesting standard-style items from the supplier rather than more intricate and unique designs.

The school will not sign contracts with suppliers before requesting visualisations and samples of proposed uniform.

The school will order new uniform each **December**. Where the school is proposing to change suppliers, it will reach out to suppliers by **October** in the determination year.

7. Uniform assistance

The school will hold second-hand school uniforms in the school office for parents to access; access to these uniforms will be made available upon request made to the Head of School.

Parents will be invited to donate their child's uniform when they no longer need it.

8. Non-compliance

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

The Head of School, or a person authorised by the Head Teacher, will be 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 member of staff will consider the pupil's age and vulnerability, the length of time it will take, and the availability of the pupil's parents. A parent will always be contacted before sending the pupil home – if contact with the pupil's parent cannot be made, the pupil will remain in school.

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

Parents will be notified of pupils' breaches of school uniform in all cases.

9. School uniform

Clothing

The school uniform is as follows:

Item	Optional or required	Branding	How to acquire
School Blazer	Required	School logo	Designated school supplier
School Tie	Required	School logo	Designated school supplier
School Jumper	Optional	School logo	Designated school supplier
White Shirt	Required	Plain, opaque white cotton or cotton/polyester, long or short sleeved, conventional design to be worn with a tie so no reverse collars.	Designated School Supplier or regular retailers
Black Trousers	Required	Business-style trousers (regular fit, and not slim fitting), full length; NOT denim, corduroy, brushed cotton, stretch material, chinos or 'jeans style'.	Designated School Supplier or regular retailers

Socks – Black/Dark Grey	Required	Short socks only, to be worn with trousers	Available from regular retailers
Coat	Optional	Plain, dark coloured, conventional in design and suitable for cold, wet weather. Fleeces and brushed cotton hoodies should not be worn	Available from regular retailers
Footwear (See Appendix 1)	Required	Entirely black, plain, and leather in appearance. Flat and continuous with no air bubbles, see through soles or missing sections of the sole. No thick 'platform' style sole. Should not go above the ankle	Available from regular retailers
Girls only - Skirt	Required	Plain Black, length: 2 inches above the knee. Formal in their presentation, free flowing, either straight or pleated. No 'lycra' type skirts allowed.	Designated Supplier and Regular Retailers
Girls only – Tights	Required	Must be worn with school skirts, plain black and opaque. Socks must not be worn with skirts	Designated Supplier and Regular Retailers
PE Kit- Shorts	Required	School Logo	Designated school supplier
PE Kit – Top	Required	School Logo	Designated school supplier
PE Kit – Shoes with laces	Required	Specifically for indoor PE. NOT basketball style trainers or converse/fashion trainers.	Available from regular retailers
PE Kit – Socks	Required	Plain white sports socks. Long sports socks, royal blue in colour, and white ankle socks	Designated school supplier and available from regular retailers.
Football boots	Required	Suitable for astroturf with plastic studs	Available from regular retailers
Shin pads	Required		Available from regular retailers

Gum Shield	Required		Available from regular retailers
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Pupils who are wearing skirts will also be required to wear [black tights](#). Black jeans will not be permitted.

The school will not consider trainers or high heels suitable school shoes; however, block heels of no more than [3cm](#) can be worn.

Pupils are responsible for ensuring they have their PE kit available on PE days.

Jewellery

The school rules on jewellery are as follows:

- A wristwatch or smart watch may be worn. Smart watches will be treated as mobile phones about when and where they can be used.
- One small single stud earring may be worn in lower lobes. Any other piercings are not allowed.
- Earrings must be removed for PE. It is not acceptable to simply cover them. They will remain the responsibility of students and therefore we do not recommend that earrings are worn on PE days.

No other jewellery is allowed. This includes all rings, bracelets or necklaces and chains. Pupils will be advised that jewellery is their personal responsibility and not that of the school. Lost or damaged items will not be refunded. All jewellery must be removed during practical lessons, including PE lessons and science experiments.

Bags

Pupils must use an appropriately sized waterproof bag to carry their books and equipment. It must hold A4-sized workbooks comfortably without causing any damage.

School bags featuring inappropriate images, slogans or phrases will not be permitted.

The school will discourage pupils from bringing valuable bags to school. The school will not be liable for lost or damaged school bags.

Hairstyles and headwear

The school reserves the right to make a judgement on whether a pupil's hairstyle, hair colour or headwear is inappropriate for the school environment; however, the school will ensure that any such judgements do not discriminate against any pupil by virtue of their protected characteristics. Each individual pupil's scenario will be considered where any judgements on appropriateness are to be made, and parents will always have the freedom to complain via the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

Pupils with long hair must ensure that this does not impede their vision, cover their face, or cause a health and safety risk. Long hair must be tied up during practical lessons, e.g., during PE.

The following hairstyles, hair colours and headwear are not considered appropriate for school:

- Hair should be of a 'natural' colour and should be without words, patterns, or emblems.
- Hair length must be of a grade 2 or above.
- Long hair should always be kept neat, tidy, and appropriately restrained for sport and practical activities alike. Any facial hair should be kept tidy and well maintained.
- A single hair accessory is allowed to be worn; it should be they should be small, plain, and discreet.
- Hats or head coverings are not to be worn at school unless for religious purposes, and they should be plain and dark navy or black.

Makeup and cosmetics

The school rules on makeup and cosmetics are as follows:

- Nail varnish, false nails or nail decoration of any kind are not allowed.
- False eyelashes are not allowed.

Pupils wearing excessive makeup will be required to remove it.

10. Adverse weather

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

For hot temperatures, this includes wearing:

- [Tops that cover the shoulder area.](#)
- [Sunglasses with UV protection when outside.](#)

Pupils will be advised not to wear any jumpers or blazers during heatwaves. If outside during break times, pupils not wearing sun-safe clothing will be advised to stay in an area protected from the sun, or spare clothing is provided.

For cold temperatures, this includes wearing:

- [Scarfs, gloves, coats, and hats when outside.](#)
- [Warm jumpers.](#)
- [Trousers, or skirts and thick tights.](#)

11. Labelling and lost property

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

Any lost clothing will be taken to the lost property box in the [school office](#). All lost property will be retained for [one month](#) and will be disposed of if it is not collected within this time.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of School. The next scheduled review date for this policy is [September 2024](#).

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff, pupils, parents, and other relevant stakeholders.



13. Appendix 1.



Yes – all black, flat



Yes – all black, flat lace up



Yes – ankle height 'Kickers'



Yes – appropriate shoe style 'Kickers'



No – platform soles



No – above ankle level and sole too chunky



No – white sole / colours on shoe / coloured stitching



No – High heel



Yes – all black, leather appearance



No - White branding / writing



Yes – all black, leather appearance



No— not leather in appearance & not flat sole



Yes – all black, leather appearance



No— not leather in appearance



Yes – all black, leather appearance



No—Above ankle height

