

School uniform and clothing in Scotland

A resource for parents and carers

September 2024

What is this resource about?

We've created guidance for schools to help them when they are thinking about their school clothing policy. This short guide is for parents and carers and summarises the key points of the guidance. You can read the full guidance by clicking on this link: (link to be added)

What do we mean by a school clothing policy?

When we talk about a clothing policy, we mean anything that pupils wear when they are at school. That might be clothes and shoes they wear in the classroom, what they wear for Physical Education (PE) or to take part in other subjects. It also includes other occasions like "dress down days" or school events.

Why has guidance been introduced?

Decisions about clothing policy are made by individual schools. This is important because it gives pupils, parents and carers the chance to have their say and helps schools to make sure that their policy meets the needs of the school community.

The new guidance applies to all schools that are managed by a local authority and will support them to make decisions about their clothing policy. It will help to make sure that clothing for school is affordable for families, protects the environment and supports all pupils to come to school feeling comfortable, confident and ready to learn.

What does the guidance say?

The guidance says that schools should listen and respond to the views of pupils, parents and carers, and school staff when they are making decisions about their clothing policy. It also says that schools should think about how they can support pupils to follow their policy and how families can get any support they might need with school clothing.

The guidance asks schools to have flexible policies that take account of some key things.

These are:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: policies to help all pupils feel comfortable and included.

Affordability: policies that limit costs for parents and carers.

Sustainability: policies that protect the environment, reduce waste and encourage the reuse of clothes.

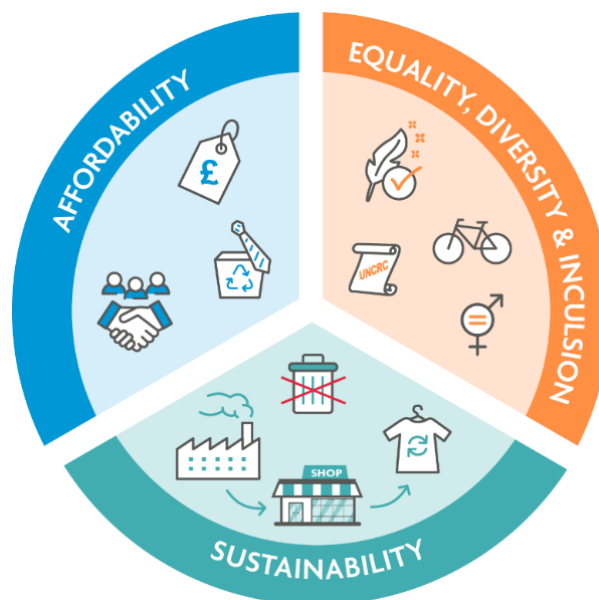


Image by: R. Shanks, University of Aberdeen.

The guidance gives schools some suggestions about how they can do this. Some of the main suggestions include:

- Prioritise the comfort and wellbeing of pupils.
- Consider the total cost of clothing for school for the whole year, and make sure that everything that's needed can be bought within a reasonable budget, similar to the amount provided for school clothing grant.
- Have plain, unbranded uniforms that can be bought from different shops.
- Make branded items of uniform optional.
- Have options for all genders.
- Promote pre-loved uniform.
- Don't change the policy too often.

Where can I find my school's policy?

It is really important that schools make sure that everyone knows about their clothing policy. Usually, you can find information about it in the school handbook. Information might also be available online, in school newsletters, or in other communications that you receive from school. Schools can give you this information in another language or format if you need it – just ask. The Parent Council might also provide accessible information to parents and carers every year.

How can I get involved in discussions about school clothing?

Schools should give pupils, parents and carers regular opportunities to input into school policies, including their clothing policy. Where schools are considering making a change to their clothing policy, this should always be done in consultation with the school community. The Parent Council can help schools with this and make sure that there are different ways for views to be shared.

Is there help available for school clothing?

Getting pre-loved items for school, rather than buying them new is a really good way to keep costs down and help reduce waste.

Most schools will have arrangements for pre-loved clothing and uniform. Information about this should be in the school handbook, their website or messages you receive from school or Parent Council. If you're not sure what the arrangements are, speak to your school or Parent Council. There might also be other pre-loved clothing options in your local community. You can find a list of some initiatives at this link: [School Uniform and Clothing Banks :: Connect](#).

Is there other help available for school clothing?

Your school should tell you where you can get help with the cost of school clothing. You may be eligible to apply for the school clothing grant. Who can apply and the amount of money you could get depends on your circumstances and your local council's

criteria. In 2024-25, everybody who is eligible will get at least £120. Information about this grant and how you can apply is available at this link: [Help with school clothing costs - mygov.scot](#). If you need any help or information, contact someone at your child's school or your local council.

You can find information about other financial help you might be entitled to at this link: [Financial support and benefits for families | Parent Club](#)

What if my child is unable to follow the school's clothing policy?

There is no law in Scotland that says pupils have to wear a uniform at school. However, most schools will have rules about what pupils wear. Parents and carers should help their children to follow these rules when they can.

However, we know that there could be lots of reasons why pupils and families can't observe their school's clothing policy. Pupils shouldn't face negative consequences because of this. If, for whatever reason your child is not able to follow their school's clothing policy, you should speak to the school about the situation. They will be able to provide advice or support and together you can agree on the best way forward.

What can I do if I have questions about my school's clothing policy?

If you have any questions about your school's approach to school clothing, speak to a member of school staff.

If you have concerns that the guidance is not being followed, your school should let you know who the best person to speak to is, and work with you to help resolve your concerns. The school will also be able to let you know what you can do if they can't resolve your concerns.



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