

The Benefits of School-Branded Uniform



**THE SCHOOLWEAR
ASSOCIATION**

Every child is worth it

Introduction

A good quality, school-branded uniform is a key element of the vast majority of UK schools, delivering important benefits to pupils, schools, and families, as well as the environment.

By creating a strong school identity which builds respect, encourages high behavioural standards and reduces bullying, teachers can focus on teaching.

Acting as a leveller between all pupils and driving equality and cohesiveness in schools, a branded uniform reduces the pressure on pupils and parents to buy the latest high street fashions and brands.

More durable and longer-lasting than high street alternatives – an environmentally sustainable uniform reduces frequency of buying new items, and creates secondhand market reducing costs for parents.

The largest survey of school uniform costs found that the average cost of all compulsory secondary school uniform and sportswear items required for school is **£101.19 per pupil.**

This provides excellent value per wear given that uniform is worn 195 days of the year, whilst data from retailers also shows that less than half of the pupil's basket needs to be replaced each subsequent school year, meaning the average annual spend per pupil of compulsory items is only **£36.24.**



Benefits of school-branded uniform

- Improves productivity and drives higher levels of educational attainment.
- Reduces social inequality and acts as a leveller between pupils.
- Is durable and environmentally friendly.
- Keeps pupils safe not only during the normal school day but also outside of the school gates.



What is a school-branded uniform?

As its name suggests, school branded uniform is simply regulation clothing with its own logo and/or colour/pattern. In most cases, it includes the school crest or emblem embroidered onto a blazer, jumper or shirt, and as well as key school sportswear too.



The problem with non-branded school uniforms is that they are open to interpretation. A policy stipulating that pupils should wear a 'a blue jumper' could lead to any number of brands, colours, shades and styles being worn. Brand pressure between pupils would become common place, leading to inconsistency, inequality and pressure to follow certain trends. In short, the whole premise of uniform would break down as it is no longer uniform.

Here is an example of what a non-branded approach to uniform could look like



Benefits to pupils

There is no doubt that a good quality, branded uniform fosters a sense of pride and belonging within a student body, as everyone wears exactly the same garments. This in turn promotes productivity and concentration in the classroom.

According to research conducted on behalf of the Schoolwear Association, a school-branded uniform can improve wellbeing and reduce bullying in school.

In focus groups with school children, teenage girls in particular reported experiencing anxiety about what to wear while non-uniform days created stress around clothing choices.

It is widely reported that young people today face unprecedented pressures, partly due to social media and celebrity culture. A school uniform is a welcome antidote to this, liberating them from the feeling that they have to look or act in a certain way.

A disadvantaged pupil does not need to feel inferior among their peers because branded uniforms from one or a small number of suppliers help to create a level playing field. It is one less thing for children (and their parents) to worry about each morning: they simply put it on without thinking about it.

For pupils, a school-branded uniform...

- Improves concentration and discipline in the classroom.
- Acts as a social leveller, reducing pressure to buy the latest high street brands or fashions.
- Reduces levels of bullying.
- Creates a sense of equality and togetherness.
- Plays an important role in stemming the tide of fast fashion.



Benefits to schools

Schools have rightly held on to uniforms as a way of reinforcing the school's identity, promoting discipline and celebrating achievement.

As well as encouraging discipline and improving concentration in the classroom, an effective uniform is an important social leveller in the playground – helping to alleviate inequality and reduce levels of bullying.

Pupils' security is also significantly increased when in uniform. Schoolwear Association research with Oxford Brookes University found that recognition outside school was the most commonly reported benefit of a school uniform.

Being easily recognisable is equally important when pupils are taken on trips or excursions outside of the classroom and carry the added benefit of making it easy to identify anyone who isn't a pupil that may have come onto school grounds.

For schools, a school-branded uniform...

- Enhances the school's brand identity in the local community.
- Helps to identify pupils outside of the school gates or on school trips as well as highlighting people on school sites who should not be there.
- Counteracts bullying in school. 70% of school leaders agree that removing branded uniform would increase bullying and undermine social cohesion*.
- Improves students' educational outcomes (60% of school leaders agree*).
- Promotes pride and belonging for a pupil in their school and local community (95% of school leaders agree*).

**Source: A Schoolwear Association survey of 169 school leaders in the UK. March 2020.*



Costs

The average cost of compulsory secondary school uniform and sportswear items is £101.19 per pupil.

This equates to an average of 6 compulsory school branded daywear and sportswear garments for an average sized pupil starting secondary school in England.

Uniform is worn for around 195 days a year and less than half of the pupil's basket needs to be replaced each year, meaning that on average the annual spend per pupil of compulsory items is only **£36.24 or just 18p a day.**

The Schoolwear Association surveyed a range of retailers from across the country that supply 11.9% of all state secondary schools in England – representing 409 schools and approximately 395,000 students.



An effective school-branded uniform...

- Represents great value for parents, with durable garments standing up to the rigours of day-to-day school life.
- Is worn 195 days of the year and reduces expenditure on high street brands and the latest fashions.
- Can be handed down to siblings and reduces the impact on the environment.
- Is made and sold by specialist retailers which offer a number of schemes such as swap shops, second hand sales, and discount vouchers.



Established in 2006, and comprising of members who clothe more than three quarters of pupils in the UK, the Schoolwear Association is the industry body and voice that represents businesses involved in the supply of school-branded uniform, including retailers, manufacturers, suppliers and agents, which all adhere to the Association's strict Code of Practice.

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