

Aims and Values of the Association

Background

The Schoolwear Association aims to promote best practice across the UK Schoolwear industry. We are committed to ensuring that a long-term, robust and competitive market for the supply of schoolwear exists and that parents, pupils and schools all get a fair deal.

The Schoolwear Association believes that well-supplied school uniforms help to promote social inclusivity, build a sense of school identity and improve outcomes for schools and pupils.

Properly developed and appropriately implemented a school uniform can:

- provide a sense of identity, community and cohesion within the school;
- support positive behaviour and school discipline;
- ensure that pupils dress appropriately for learning activity;
- remove peer pressure to dress in particular fashions;
- enable pupils of all backgrounds to share in a common identity which embraces their particular requirements;
- help reduce inequalities between pupils and help reduce some triggers for bullying;
- benefit safeguarding and attendance policies through helping to identify truants;
- assist identification of strangers on school premises;
- support and promote the ethos of the school

We are committed to ensuring that school uniforms provide fair value for all pupils at the least cost to the world's resources.

Our Values

All members of the Schoolwear Association share our values which are:

1. Inclusivity

Access to a suitable school uniform should be available to all, irrespective of gender identity, race, religion or belief, disability, body shape or income. We expect our members to work with their schools and suppliers to ensure that the products they provide are available to all pupils and to have options in place to support those who would otherwise be excluded.

2. Responsibility

Our members have an ethical duty to ensure the sustainability of their products in terms of both the environmental and labour impact of their supply chains.

In a world of dwindling resources and cheap labour, the Schoolwear industry is seeking to minimise its impact. By their nature school uniform designs do not generally change year-on-year. Schoolwear Association members are committed to offering durable and long-lasting garments that can be worn many times. This serves to reduce their overall impact on the environment and but also provides significant value for money for parents and carers.

We actively promote clothing designed to be long-lasting and champion schemes to reuse and recycle old garments. We believe our industry and our members should be at the forefront of sustainability and must be rigorous in ensuring that everyone working in our supply chain is fairly treated and paid.

3. Transparency and value for money

As our members are often appointed sole suppliers by schools and the requirement to purchase school uniforms is placed on parents, our members have a duty to ensure that they are delivering value for money. Our members must ensure that their pricing is transparent to both parents and schools, that the industry is competitive and fair and that the decisions made by our members and our schools are demonstrably made in the interests of customers.

We welcome the guidelines produced by government departments in England, Scotland and Wales as providing clarity for the industry and school governors. We actively encourage our members to promote and support this guidance and to be proactive in future developments.

Code of Practice for Members of the Schoolwear Association.

Values

All members are expected to ensure their business uphold the aims, and values of the Schoolwear Association, in particular our values of Inclusivity, Responsibility and Transparency.

1. Inclusivity (Our Commitment to our parents)

- Members will have programmes in place and work with their schools to ensure that families on low incomes are not educationally disadvantaged or excluded due to the cost of uniforms. Some examples of social value initiatives provided by Schoolwear Association members to support families with affordability include offering a second- hand uniform service; establishing 'swap shops', and providing vouchers for those most in need.
- To ensure that parents can access uniform all year round, members must commit to keeping appropriate stock levels 12 months of the year.
- Members are encouraged to provide uniforms for ALL pupils, irrespective of sex or gender identity, race, religion or belief, disability or body shape. Members must commit to providing this at no additional cost to parents where they are operating as sole stockists.

2. Responsibility (Our Commitment to our suppliers and the world)

- Members will operate to the highest reasonable standards of ethical compliance, working to ensure that everyone in their supply chain is fairly treated. They will take active steps to ensure that they only source product from suppliers who respect national labour laws or the standards set by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), whichever is the higher benchmark.
- Our members should have policies in place to assess and minimise the environmental impact of their operations, and will ensure that these are made available to their customers and stakeholders.
- We actively encourage our members to bring innovations to the market which reduce the environmental impact of their products. Where products are supplied, or claims made for products based on their environmental impact or sustainability, the documentation to support this should be freely available on request to schools, parents and any other interested parties.
- Suppliers or manufacturers will actively assist retail members in their obligations to provide ethical and environmental data to their customers.
- Our members are committed to ensuring that the garments worn by pupils are safe. Our members should be fully aware of the issues in this area and ensure that the products

they make and supply comply with the regulations, including, but not limited to the following:

- The code of practice on Mechanical Safety of Childrenswear.
- The Safety of Children's Clothing - Cord and Drawstrings.
- General Product Safety Regulations
- Flammability

3. Transparency and value for money (Our Commitment to our schools and our customers)

- Our members should encourage schools to comply with guidance provided by the DfE or other UK devolved governments on the Schoolwear market. These seek to ensure a competitive tendering process and caution against the payment of commission for exclusive contracts.
- Members should always ensure that they are complying with competition law.
- Pricing should be agreed with Schools in an open and transparent manner.
- Where long-term supply contracts are agreed with schools these should include clauses for early termination in the event that pricing moves beyond benchmarks or if performance falls below certain agreed and measurable standards.
- On the transfer of a contract members will actively work together to minimise costs to the school or the environment.
- Members should agree with schools a detailed product list and not make changes without the consent of the school.
- Members will respect the logos and trademarks of individual schools. They will only use these trademarks with the written agreement of the school and will not supply uniform against the wishes of a school.
- Members must give the school as much notice as possible (and ideally a minimum of 12 months) of any events which might have an adverse effect on their ability to supply the agreed uniform.
- Members will ensure that the final price paid by parents is clearly displayed during the sales process.
- Members should not collude with schools, other members or any other parties in practices which would artificially increase the overall costs to all parents. Including the payment of commissions.