



SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY 2023

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). All Members of the Board of Trustees are Directors of the company as well as Trustees of the exempt charity; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director. This Policy applies to all academies within the Link Academy Trust.

As a Trust we strongly encourage schools to have a uniform as it can play a key role in:

- promoting the ethos of a school
- providing a sense of belonging and identity
- setting an appropriate tone for education

By creating a common identity amongst all pupils, regardless of background, a school uniform can act as a social leveller. It can reduce bullying and peer pressure to wear the latest fashions or other expensive clothes. If, however, the uniform is too expensive it can place an unreasonable burden on families. Furthermore, if a distinction can be made between those who can afford it and those who cannot, this can reduce the benefits of a uniform and has the potential to negatively impact attendance, access and participation and lead to bullying.

1. AIMS

This policy aims to:

- Set out our approach to requiring a uniform that is of reasonable cost and offers the best value for money for parents and carers.
- Explain how we will avoid discrimination in line with our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- Clarify our expectations for academy uniform.

2. OUR LEGAL DUTIES UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against an individual based on the protected characteristics, which include sex, race, religion or belief and gender reassignment.

To avoid discrimination, our academies will:

- Avoid listing uniform items based on gender, to give all pupils the opportunity to wear the uniform they feel most comfortable in or that most reflects their self-identified gender.
- Ensure that our uniform costs the same for all pupils within the individual academy.
- Allow all pupils to have long hair (though we reserve the right to ask for this to be tied back) and to style their hair in the way that is appropriate for school yet makes them feel most comfortable.
- Allow pupils to request changes to swimwear for religious reasons.
- Allow pupils to wear headscarves and other religious or cultural symbols.
- Allow adaptations to our policy on the grounds of equality by asking pupils or their parents to get in touch with the Academy Head, who can answer questions about the policy and respond to any requests.

3. LIMITING THE COST OF UNIFORM

Our academies have a duty to make sure that the uniform we require is affordable, in line with statutory guidance from the Department of Education on the cost of uniform.

We understand that items with distinctive characteristics (such as branded items, or items that have to have a school logo or a unique fabric/colour/design) cannot be purchased from a wide range of retailers and that requiring many such items limits parents' ability to 'shop around' for a low price.

We will make sure our uniform:

- Is available at a reasonable cost.
- Provides the best value for money for parents/carers.

We will do this by:

- Carefully considering whether any items with distinctive characteristics are necessary.
- Limiting any items with distinctive characteristics where possible.
- Considering cheaper alternatives to branded items, such as logos that can be ironed on, as long as this does not compromise quality and durability.
- Avoiding specific requirements for items pupils could wear on non-uniform days, such as coats, bags and shoes.
- Keeping the number of optional branded items to a minimum, so that the uniform can act as a social leveller.
- Avoiding different uniform requirements for different year/class/house groups.
- Avoiding different uniform requirements for extra-curricular activities.
- Considering alternative methods for signalling differences in groups for inter-school competitions, such as creating posters or labels.
- Making sure that arrangements are in place for parents to acquire second-hand uniform items.
- Avoiding frequent changes to uniform specifications and minimising the financial impact on parents of any changes.
- Consulting with parents and pupils on any proposed significant changes to the uniform policy and carefully considering any complaints about the policy.

4. EXPECTATION FOR UNIFORM

(Put your individual school uniform requirements here – include where to purchase it from and outline the unbranded academy uniform equivalent stockists and how parents/carers can obtain second hand uniform. Also add about headscarves and hijab/book bags/lunch boxes and water bottles)

5. EXPECTATIONS FOR OUR COMMUNITY

5.1 Pupils

Pupils are expected to always wear the correct uniform (other than specified non-uniform days) while:

- On the academy premises
- Travelling to and from the academy
- At out of academy events or on trips that are organised by the academy, or where they are representing the academy (if required)

5.2 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers should make sure their child has the correct uniform and PE kit and that every item is:

- Clean and tidy
- Clearly labelled with the child's name

Parents are also expected contact the Academy Head if they want to request an amendment to the uniform policy in relation to:

- Their child's protected characteristics.
- The cost of the uniform.

Parents are expected to lodge any complaints or objections relating to the uniform in a timely and reasonable manner.

Disputes about the cost of the uniform will be resolved locally where the academy will work closely with parents to arrive at a mutually acceptable outcome.

5.3 Staff

Staff will monitor pupils for correct uniform. They will give any pupils and families not adhering to the uniform policy the opportunity to discuss any concerns but will follow up with the Academy Head if the situation does not improve.

In cases where it is suspected that financial hardship has resulted in a pupil not following this uniform policy, Academy Heads will take a mindful and supportive approach to finding a solution.

5.4 Trustees

The Trust board will review this policy in the first instance and make sure that it:

- Is appropriate for the Trust
- Is implemented fairly across the Trust.
- Takes into account the views of parents and pupils.
- Offers a uniform that is appropriate, practical and safe for all pupils.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Reviewed and approved by Standards & Curriculum Committee: 9th May 2023
Next review: Summer 2025