

## Uniform guidance

The guidance outlined below takes our uniform guidance and explains the expectations from the school. The Headteacher met with a group of Year 10 pupils who were representative of diverse groups across the year group. We looked at our current uniform guidance and identified if it was fit for the times we were in and if what we were asking was having a negative impact on families ability to afford it. We also considered our uniform guidance to make sure that it met the Equality Act. This guidance outlines how our uniform should be worn and how we will endeavour to ensure that it is equitable for all.

### The context

Our uniform policy is deliberately designed so that children can choose between blazer/tie or summer shirt. Our guidance was implemented in September 2021. Following the further consultation we have agreed the following.

For school you can wear either:

- School blazer and tie, black trousers/skirt and white shirt, black shoes/trainers
- Summer shirt and blazer, black trousers/skirt, black shoes/trainers
- Summer shirt, PE sweatshirt, black trousers/skirt, black shoes/trainers.
- Black jumper can be worn but that house colours and a logo must be visible
- House colours and/or a logo must be visible at all times for all pupils no matter what uniform combination they are wearing

We have some further specifications you need to be aware of:

1. We do not allow skinny jeans or leggings
2. Headscarves (if worn) must be plain black or white
3. Ties and summer shirts need to represent the House you are in
4. Hoodies and outdoor wear are not permitted in the school building
5. Shoes/trainers need to be completely black with only small reflective markings
6. Acrylic nails are not permitted because of health and safety reasons
7. Nose rings are not permitted for health and safety reasons; only small sleepers or studs are to be worn in ears because of health and safety reasons
8. Patterns shaved into hair are not permitted
9. We do require all children to bring a bag in which a number of A4 size books can be carried
10. We do require pupils to have a pencil case with pens, pencils, a rubber, a ruler and calculator
11. Mobile phones, AirPods/headphones etc. are not allowed in school and if seen, will be confiscated until the end of the day

We try and make our uniform as accessible as possible for families but please, if you are struggling to provide any items or equipment, please get in touch.

## **PE Kit**

A change of clothes is essential for PE lessons. Safety and suitability are the essential requirements of sportswear. PE uniform expectations are set out below:

- PE t-shirt (G-Force)
- PE shorts or tracksuit pants (G-Force)

- PE games socks (G-Force)
- Optional - PE hooded top (G-Force)
- Change of suitable footwear (trainers/football boots should lessons be on the field)

In addition, we allow pupils to wear:

- Plain black leggings underneath their PE shorts
- Plain black under/base layer underneath PE t-shirt

Pupils should remove all jewellery before participating in PE lessons. Any jewellery that cannot be removed should be taped to ensure it is safe.

### **What is important to us?**

What is important is that pupils are easy to be identified to the school that they attend. This means for us that what is important is that the logo of the school and the house colours must be able to be seen. This is the guiding principle.

### **Poverty**

Our uniform is designed to minimise the impact of tight finances on families. Even more so in the current climate we need to be considerate of this and we do need to make adaptations.

- We have allowed black trainers of any material to be worn for a number of years. We will continue with this but they do need to be plain black and not have reflective markings on.
- We know some of our branded items are more expensive. Our PE kit is more expensive and so are our polo shirts. We chose to keep this as the material for both of them washes very well, dries quickly and they don't stain in the same way that shirts do, nor do they lose their shape. We will continue to maintain the same provider but we will use a significant part of our pupil premium to provide PE kit or polo shirts, as we currently do.
- If there are issues whereby families struggle with a PE kit we will always provide or through discussion with the Headteacher or relevant member of SLT we will allow pupils to wear plain black shorts or plain black tracksuit.
- We will purchase a number of logos so that we can sew these ourselves onto plain black blazers so that families can purchase a plain black blazer from supermarkets.

## **Consultation and general considerations**

### **Health and Safety**

It is important our pupils are safe in school. We discussed how headscarves are worn and it was felt that, except in PE when pupils are doing contact sports, headscarves can be worn loosely. We felt that the risk of them being pulled and becoming loose is not a significant issue, although if worn loosely then pupils need to be aware of the risk. It is not school leaders or staff to dictate how a headscarf should be worn.

We know that some of our pupils wear headscarves that rest on shoulders. This is fine as long as the school logo and house colours are clearly visible. If pupils headscarves are lower and cover the logo and school colours then pupils may be asked to adjust.

False acrylic nails are an issue in school generally and because they are a danger in PE. Pupils will be asked to remove their nails if they come wearing long, false nails. They could spend time in remove if they do not do this.

We don't specify a length of skirt as we don't want to dictate how girls should wear their skirts. All we say is that if a skirt is too long on the floor then it does pose a health and safety risk and so if pupils choose to wear a long skirt then it should be above the shoes. We agreed that depending on the shape of a body, some skirts may be classed as tight no matter what and we were all agreed that we shouldn't be policing bodies. What was suggested is that girls may choose to wear shorts under their skirts.

We discussed nose rings and we are all agreed that nose rings or septum piercings/rings should not be worn in school. This is from a health and safety point of view. A nose stud is less likely to get caught. We do allow nose studs if they are small. If a pupil arrives at school with a nose ring then we will ask for it to be removed the next day. If not, then pupils will be expected to cover with a plaster and there may be a sanction which could include the remove room.

We don't specify the number of earrings a pupil can wear as long as they are small studs or sleepers. We know that for some pupils wearing a headscarf they could have multiple studs or sleepers in which staff might not necessarily see. In terms of being equitable to those who don't wear a headscarf then we don't specify the number. We do ask though that in PE they are removed or covered with plasters if for some reason they can't be removed.

We wouldn't expect pupils to wear heeled shoes because of health and safety issues. In much the same way that we ask staff not to wear flip flops or beach sandals for health and safety reasons, there are considerations we all need to take in terms of health and safety. If a member of staff chose to wear heels and slipped and hurt themselves that would be their responsibility; for pupils we have different responsibilities.

### **Equality Act 2010 and school uniform**

One of our four key values is celebrating diversity. How do we allow this within uniform guidance when we have a uniform? We chose to look at this within the protected characteristics and through lens of pupils being able to explore their individuality. We decided:

- That despite the request for pupils to wear shorts to school that this was not something that we felt was a pressing concern at this moment in time. We would always deal with on a case by case basis.
- We have never discriminated against braids, corn rows, dreadlocks or afro hair. It has never crossed our mind to suggest that children with afro hair should wear it in a certain way. That continues. We do extend that to children who choose to colour their hair in different ways.
- Under clothes tops and leggings. We know that some of our pupils prefer not to show their arms for religious reasons and non-religious reasons. We are happy with plain black tops being worn under summer shirts or short sleeve shirts which keep pupils warm and cover arms. This also supports those pupils who wish to cover their arms if there are scars. We know that children may wear leggings under their skirts to cover their legs instead of tights. We are happy to allow this if the leggings come to their ankles and don't stop mid calf.
- Some pupils have expressed a wish following wearing a mask over Covid to wear a face covering or niqab. Where a niqab is wishing to be worn, we have consulted with a number of our community partners, scholars and organisations, including the DfE, and we have decided that this should be something that is considered only in Year 10. If a pupil wishes to wear a niqab, we ask that parents discuss with the Headteacher in person just as we do if a parent wishes to remove their child from RSE. We will never say no but we recognise that there are some challenges if a person chooses to cover their face for religious reasons and we want to make sure the child and family are well supported in this decision.

- Headscarves and hijabs. As outlined earlier, we don't specify how hijabs should be worn – we just ask that they are black or white (white to represent some cultural norms) – but we do ask that they are worn so that they don't cover the school logo or house colours. We do expect pupils in contact sports or trampolining to ensure their head scarf is secured properly so that there is not a risk of harm to the pupil if it was to be pulled.
- We don't allow pupils to have patterns shaved into their hair because of the fact that it is important we keep the 'street' out of school. We don't know if a shaving is related to specific issues outside so we will ask pupils to colour their hair in with a mascara wand or similar. We do recognise that after Eid some pupils may have shavings in and we are happy to allow those to grow out from Eid.
- The variety of combinations pupils can wear as their uniform supports pupils who may be gender fluid, gender questioning or transitioning. It allows enough flexibility for pupils and is effectively gender neutral.

#### **Additional changes and discussions**

- We don't allow hats in the school building and we are agreed that, unless there is a medical reason, then this remains. We will, after requests from pupils, allow caps outside in the sun. This seems reasonable.
- We discussed leggings and sports wear to be worn in school. However, following discussion with staff we felt that our uniform policy is flexible enough without extending further outside of the uniform combinations allowed.
- Unnecessary jewellery such as ankle bracelets do just add to the potential of them being broken or lost and causing disruption in school so, whilst we allow earrings and necklaces under clothes (for example, a pupil may want to wear a cross as part of their faith) we don't believe there is a reason why pupils should wear ankle bracelets. There is a danger in a busy school of things becoming lost or broken and we need to minimise this.
- We do expect pupils to have a bag and equipment because they are there to learn. Our Compelling Behaviour Policy outlines this that we want pupils to be responsible and curious. We can always provide bags and equipment but pupils do have to be responsible and bring this every day.

We have one of the most flexible uniform expectations not just in Rochdale but also much wider. We know that whatever we do, pupils will always push the expectations. We hope that by clarifying some issues here we can make our uniform work for all of us. There are expectations – for example, a tie must be worn if wearing a shirt so we can see the house colours; coats are not needed in the building so we are allowing a black jumper, black cardigan as long as they have a logo; we do allow different hair colours but wearing ripped tights or ripped jeans is not 'smart' for school; health and safety issues means that whilst pupils might want to wear certain things (i.e. nose rings, false nails) they aren't suitable for school.

We've taken into account the diversity of our pupils and this should act as a guide for us all.

5.4.22