


Willow Dene School Uniform policy

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PARTNERSHIP OF SCHOOLS

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Set out our approach to requiring a uniform that is 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 school uniform.

Our school's 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 school will:

- Avoid listing uniform items based on sex, to give all pupils the opportunity to wear the uniform they feel most comfortable in or that most reflects their self-identified gender.
- Make sure that our uniform costs the same for all pupils.
- Allow all pupils to have long hair (though we reserve the right to ask for this to be tied back).
- Allow all pupils 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 for adaptations to our policy on the grounds of equality by asking pupils or their parents to get in touch with the head teacher who can answer questions about the policy and respond to any requests.

Limiting the cost of school uniform

At Willow Dene, we recognise that our children's response to clothes may vary depending on their individual physical presentation or their sensory needs. As such uniform is not compulsory at Willow Dene but is encouraged where this is reasonable. Our school has a duty to make sure that the uniform we require is affordable, in line with statutory guidance from the Department for Education on the cost of school 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:

- Ensuring that the school carries a stock of uniform jumpers and cardigans for Primary and Secondary children, and jumpers and track jackets for Sixth form young people. These are sourced at best price.
- Providing two free uniform jumpers and/or cardigans to all new starters at primary and secondary school or two free jumpers and/ or track jackets for Sixth form
- Ensuring that all parents are aware of the flexibility within our uniform policy through briefings, newsletters and individual conversations.
- Ensuring that pre-loved uniforms are collected at school so that other children can benefit where this is helpful.
- Offering an exchange service for bought uniforms, which for whatever reason are unsuitable for the wearer.
- Limiting any items with distinctive characteristics where possible. At Willow Dene we offer branded jumpers and cardigans, but these are not compulsory and parents can opt for non-school uniform or non-branded items of corresponding colours which are long-lasting or of a low cost. Sixth form clothing is non branded, school provide a badge which can be attached to either jumper or track jacket. Parents/carers can purchase a navy-blue blazer at the best price, through the school or independently from the high street provider.
- Providing PE kits free of charge when it is appropriate for children to change for PE.
- Listening to parents' views on the colour of the primary uniform and changing it gradually, over time to a darker colour which will wear better.
- Avoiding specific requirements for items pupils could wear on non-school days, such as coats, bags and shoes.
- Keeping the number of optional branded items to a minimum, so that the school's uniform can act as a social leveler.
- Avoiding different uniform requirements for different year/class groups.
- Avoiding different uniform requirements for extra-curricular activities.
- Considering alternative methods for signaling differences in groups for interschool 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.

Expectations for school uniform

Our school's uniform

- At Willow Dene we offer branded cardigans and jumpers for primary and secondary and non-branded jumpers and track jackets in all sizes for Sixth form. These are not compulsory, and parents can opt for non-school uniform or non-branded items of corresponding colours which are long lasting or of a low cost. At primary, the colour of uniform is grey and at secondary it is aubergine and for Sixth form Oxford blue.

Where to purchase it

Cardigans, jumpers and/or track jackets can be purchased from parents MCAS (My Child at School) account and delivered via the school office.

Expectations for our school community

Pupils

Children are not expected to wear anything that exacerbates sensory sensitivities or makes them physically uncomfortable. The school carries a stock of spare clothes so that children can be changed during the day if their clothes become wet or soiled. We recognise that some children may find it distressing to take off their school uniform and therefore have uniform tops amongst the spare clothes. The school also has laundry facilities so the child's own clothing can be washed and dried during the school day. School provides wet weather clothing and footwear for outdoor learning and business uniforms for 6th form Business Ventures.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to make sure their child has comfortable clothes to wear and a supply of pads if children are not continent. Items should be:

- Clean .
- Well fitting.
- Clearly labelled with the child's name.
- In good condition.

Parents are also expected to contact the headteacher if they want to discuss 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 school uniform in a timely and reasonable manner.

Disputes about the cost of the school uniform will be:

- Resolved locally.
- Dealt with in accordance with our school's complaints policy.

The school will work closely with parents to arrive at a mutually acceptable outcome.

Staff

Staff will closely monitor pupils to make sure they are dressed appropriately and talk to parents where this is needed.

In cases where it is suspected that financial hardship has resulted in a pupil not being appropriately dressed for school, staff will take a mindful and considerate approach to resolving the situation.

Governors

The local school committee (LSC) will review this policy and make sure that it:

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

The LSC will also make sure that the school's uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money, for example by avoiding single supplier contracts and by re-tendering contracts at least every 5 years.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Local School Committee will assess the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. This Policy will be reviewed by the Local School Committee on a two yearly cycle.

Policy adopted:	Autumn 2024
Other related policies:	Anti-bullying Behaviour Complaints Equality of Opportunity
Next Review:	Autumn 2026