

Cutting the cost of uniforms – what the new law means

No parent should have to lie awake at night wondering how they'll afford their child's uniform. When done right, a school uniform brings people together, and can help everyone feel they fit in. But expensive uniforms do the opposite.

The Children's Society has been campaigning on this issue since 2014, when a group of young people found that costly uniforms were putting pressure on children and their families. The law was finally changed in 2021.

What changes should families expect to see?

- It should be easy to find and understand the school uniform policy.
- Schools should be engaging with pupils and their families when developing their uniform policy.
- Pre-loved uniform should be easily available.
- There should be choice in where you can buy uniforms from.
- There should not be a long list of branded items to buy.
- Uniform bought from school recommended suppliers should be good value for money.
- If your child is missing uniform items because you've struggled to afford them, schools should take a considerate approach to how they address this.

These changes should be made before summer 2022, so you can see the difference by the time you buy uniform for the new September school year. Some changes may take a little longer if they involve school contracts with suppliers.

Who will be involved in making this change?

Depending on the type of school, a governing board, or academy trust board, is responsible for setting school uniform policies. Other people involved may be the headteacher or school leadership team. A Parent Teacher Association (PTA) may also support the school through organising uniform sales or swaps.

How can you get involved?

- Download our practical resources to share with your child's school. These have been created by us in partnership with the Child Poverty Action Group and Children North-East: childrenssociety.org.uk/cut-the-cost
- Ask your child's school how they're planning to engage with pupils and their families about the uniform policy.
- Volunteer to support your child's school in setting up a pre-loved uniform shop.