

Cheaper school uniform could be on the way thanks to new statutory guidance

The consultation is seeking views on draft statutory guidance that would see a more consistent approach when school governing bodies set school uniform and appearance policy.

Under the new guidance, governing bodies would be expected to consider ways of keeping down the costs of school uniform. These could include stipulating basic items and colours but not styles; this would mean that items could be bought from multiple retail chains at reasonable prices and not just from one supplier.

Schools would also be encouraged to consider whether school logos are strictly necessary and, if so, whether they should be restricted to just one item of uniform or provided free of charge and sewed, ironed or stuck onto items of clothing.

Governing bodies will also be asked to consider whether there is a need for different uniforms for summer and winter.

Equality forms a key part of the guidance, with governing bodies required to think about issues such as discrimination on grounds of race or religious belief, disability and sex and gender identity – with the latter taking into account gender-neutral school uniform items and how governing bodies can meet the needs of pupils undergoing gender reassignment.

The Education Secretary launched the draft guidance for consultation today at Ysgol Glan Morfa in Splott, Cardiff. The school has a scheme to help reduce the cost of school uniforms for parents, with both new and second-hand uniform items that are either given free to parents or for a nominal charge.

Kirsty Williams said:

“Families face many different costs when it comes to school uniform and I want to make sure we’re doing everything we can to make uniform more affordable and more available.

“In the summer, I launched our PDG-Access scheme which is already helping parents with the cost of not just school uniform, but equipment, sports kits and kit for activities outside of school.

“By putting in place statutory guidance, my expectation is that governing bodies will have a much more consistent approach to issues such as cost and also show a much greater degree of flexibility when it comes to very hot or very cold weather.

“But this also goes much further than just practical considerations; this is about equality and pupils’ wellbeing. I

don't want our learners, for whatever reason, to feel uncomfortable about wearing their uniform. That's why it's so important that as many young people as possible take part in this consultation and tell us their views"

The consultation can be completed here:

<https://beta.gov.wales/guidance-school-governing-bodies-school-uniform-and-appearance-policies>