

New law to make school uniform costs affordable for all

School uniforms will be made more affordable for families under a new law passed by Parliament today (29 April).

[The Act](#), which received Royal Assent today, will require schools to follow new statutory guidance on uniform costs, instructing them to keep prices down.

The cross-party support for the Bill recognised the costs parents face for school uniform, particularly for branded items, and the statutory guidance will tell schools to consider high street alternatives.

It will also include measures on encouraging second-hand uniform, schools' arrangements with suppliers, and ensuring parents have access to clear information about uniform policies.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

School uniforms are important in establishing the right ethos in a school. They also help to improve behaviour and a sense of belonging and identity. But we want to be sure they are affordable for parents.

This new law will help to save families money and ensure the cost of a blazer or shirt is never a barrier to accessing the best possible education.

The new law, introduced as a Private Members' Bill by Mike Amesbury MP and given Government backing, enables the Government to set statutory guidance for schools to consider about costs for uniforms.

The Department will publish the statutory guidance in the autumn this year, which will focus on ensuring costs are reasonable for families of all backgrounds and giving parents the best value for money.

It will also advise schools to make sure that when they take up contracts with uniform suppliers, they are competitive and transparent in order to keep costs down.

The Government is committed to ensuring no family is deterred from applying to a school due to the costs for its uniform. Once guidance is published, schools will be required by law to consider it when developing their uniform policies.

Matt Easter, Co-Chair of the Schoolwear Association said:

As the leading schoolwear industry body, we welcome the Bill and the help it will provide for schools looking for further guidance on their uniform policies, to ensure the process of choosing a uniform supplier is as robust, competitive and easy as possible.

In particular, we welcome the Government's recognition that the quality and longevity of garments should be considered alongside their cost. Whilst the vast majority of schools already work hard to keep their uniforms affordable, this Bill is an important step to help them continue to make the best decisions on their uniform policies and offer the best support to parents.

Mark Russell, Chief Executive of The Children's Society, said:

We are thrilled this new law has passed and we thank Minister Gibb and the Department for Education for their support. This legislation will be vital in ensuring that school uniforms become more affordable for families across the country.

Young people told us back in 2014 that high-priced school uniforms had a huge impact on their ability to make the most of their education. We hope this new law will make children feel more equal to their classmates and make life easier for struggling families.