

Good morning,

As a School we have contributed to the consultation on school uniforms. The Board of Governors have asked me to submit our previous response, to the consultation, to the education committee see attached).

The governors have also asked that the following is noted:

The School express their opposition to Clauses 3 and 4 of the proposed Bill, namely;

Clause 3 – a proposed restriction on the required number of general uniform items, or of individual branded items; and

Clause 4 – a proposed cap on the cost of uniform required, either for any specific items or for the total uniform.

Both these clauses are apparently subject to a commencement order, which, in effect, delays their implementation after the remainder of the new Uniform Bill has been legally approved.

With thanks

Nikki Sinnerton

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Response ID ANON-HE9Q-UYWC-Y

Submitted to REVIEW OF SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

Submitted on 2024-08-29 14:35:46

Introduction

Are you responding as a:

Representative of a school

If you are responding as a representative of an organisation, please provide the name of the organisation.

Organisation:

Strathearn School

Can you please provide the first part of your postcode (BT....)? If you are responding on behalf of a school or organisation, then please provide the postcode of that school/organisation

Postcode:

BT4 2AU

Statutory Guidance

1 Do you agree that schools should be legally required to comply with Departmental uniform guidance?

No

If you have answered no, please outline your reasons below.

Statutory Guidance:

As a School we complete this on a voluntary basis. However, making this mandatory will only add additional bureaucratic burdens to schools including costs.

Strengthened Guidance

2 Do you agree with these principles?

Yes

3 Should any others be included? If yes, please state any additional principles.

Strengthen Guidance:

Affordability

4 Do you agree that it should be compulsory for schools to demonstrate how they have taken costs into account when designing their uniform?

No

5 Do you agree that it should be compulsory for schools to publish details of the costs of their uniform?

No

Designing a uniform

6 Do you agree with our proposals that schools must review their uniform policy and explain their decision to use any unusual colours or designs?

No

7 Do you agree that where a crest is considered necessary on a blazer or jumper that an option to purchase the crest alone should be available?

No

8 Do you agree that this crest should be reusable?

Don't Know / Unsure

PE Kit

9 Do you agree that branded sports kits should not be compulsory elements of a school PE kit?

No

10 Do you agree that parents should only have to purchase specific branded or school sports kits when their child is chosen to represent the school, either as part of a team or individually?

Yes

11 Do you agree that schools should aim to have team kits available for loan for those representing the school?

No

Single Supplier Arrangements

12 Do you agree that all schools should be required to list more than one supplier of their compulsory uniform items?

Yes

13 Do you agree that any financial or in-kind benefits to schools from arrangements with suppliers or manufacturers should be published?

No

Cost Control (Price Cap)

14 Do you consider that a method of cost control should be introduced, for example, a cost cap?

No

Cost Control:

This will place significant financial and administrative burden on schools to price items each year and take due consideration of costs. Suppliers tend to purchase items from a variety of different manufacturers and this can create additional burden trying to ascertain costs.

15 Do you agree that a key consideration in all actions taken by the Department should be to encourage schools to change their practice in setting uniform policies to ensure there is a competitive market for uniform items?

No

Comfort

16 Do you agree with the proposal to make it compulsory for schools to demonstrate how their school uniform policy fulfils the conditions of comfort, flexibility and safety?

No

Uniform Banks

17 Do you agree that all schools should be required to establish a Uniform Bank?

Yes

School uniforms should be developed in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

18 Do you agree that engagement with pupils on uniform policy should be mandatory?

No

19 Do you agree that engagement with parents on uniform policy should be mandatory?

No

20 Do you agree that schools should be required to publish details of stakeholder consultation on uniform policy?

No

Publish a school's uniform policy

21 Do you agree that it should become a legal requirement to publish details on the development of the uniform policy?

No

22 If yes, which of the following should be a requirement to publish? (tick all that apply)

If you have ticked "other", please specify in the text box below.

Publish:

Regular review of a school's uniform policy

23 Do you agree with the proposal that schools should review their uniform policy every three years?

Yes

If you have answered no, please outline your reasons below.

review:

Increasing the number of bands of provision of the School Uniform Grant

24 Do you agree that an additional banding should be introduced (subject to available funding) for pupils entering Year 8 and Year 13 and also for Year 11 in the Dickson plan areas?

Yes

Monitoring and Evaluation

25 Do you agree with the proposed plans for monitoring and evaluation?

No

Monitoring:

Places undue pressure on schools to administer. Also creates additional costs through use of resources in doing so.

Additional Information

If you have any further comments on the consultation document please use the box below.

Additional Information:

As a school, Strathearn currently adheres closely to DE guidance on school uniforms and does not agree that such guidelines should become mandatory thus causing additional administration and bureaucracy that schools can ill afford. Following recent consultation with pupils, staff and parents this year, overwhelming support was expressed for the current style, design and colour of the present uniform. Any future significant change to a uniform would take at least two to three years to implement to allow suppliers to run down old stock but also to allow parents to re-use current uniform. During times of extreme financial pressure, schools do not have the resources of staffing, including time, to continually monitor the cost of uniform against the theoretical cost cap. Cost caps rarely work in practice to artificially manipulate the market and therefore it is no surprise that no other jurisdiction across the UK or Ireland has attempted to implement one. In seeking schools to have a uniform that includes items that can be purchased from supermarkets only favours the large chains and does very little to support our own local suppliers whose selling window is limited to a short period few weeks in the year. Our solution would be to increase the uniform grant by a significant amount (minimum 50% or more) and annually thereafter by the rate of inflation - the extra cost being funded by internal DE/EA savings and not diverted away from front line school services.