

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing as a parent in Northern Ireland to express my support for the School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill. Although the consultation period has closed, I hope it's still possible to share my experience as it highlights the importance of statutory guidance — particularly regarding gender equality and pupil wellbeing.

My daughter attends a controlled primary school where the uniform policy allows girls to wear skirts or pinafores and boys to wear trousers. When I recently asked if she could wear trousers, I was told "no one had ever asked before," and that most girls wear shorts under their skirts. While I understand the intention, it reflects an underlying issue: the policy assumes a traditional gender norm that doesn't work for every child and places the burden on pupils — particularly girls — to adapt in order to feel comfortable.

From a developmental and educational perspective, this matters. According to PlayBoard NI and UNICEF, **free movement and active play** are essential to physical, emotional, and cognitive development in young children. Uniforms that restrict movement, require modesty adaptations (like shorts under skirts), or create discomfort during play can impact participation and confidence — especially for girls.

In addition, research by YoungMinds and the Children's Society shows that **feeling comfortable and accepted in school clothing directly affects self-esteem, engagement, and school attendance.**

Offering children the option to wear trousers or leggings as standard — regardless of gender — supports inclusion, wellbeing, and learning. Yet in the current system, families like mine must challenge outdated norms one school at a time. I believe statutory guidelines would help ensure consistency across schools, protect pupil voice, and ease the pressure on individual families and staff.

Thank you for your work on behalf of children and families across Northern Ireland. I hope these lived experiences will be considered as part of your continuing work on the Bill.

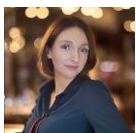
Warm regards,

Kind regards,

Diana Greenlee

[Redacted signature]

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**Diana Greenlee**  
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