

School Uniforms (Trousers) Bill – Citizen Space summary report

The activity ran from 02/07/2026 to 23/08/2026.

Responses to this survey: **1520**

1: Please confirm that you have read the Privacy Notice for Northern Ireland Assembly Committees by clicking the button below.

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	1520	100.00%
No	0	0.00%

2: Do you consent to your submission being published on the Committee's website and included in the Committee's report?

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes. Publish in full.	372	24.47%
Yes. Publish but with my personal information and any content that could be used to identify me redacted.	1148	75.53%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

3: What is your name?

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

4: What is your email address?

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

5: Are you responding as:

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
A pupil	56	3.68%
A parent of a pupil	793	52.17%
An individual (other than a pupil or parent)	578	38.03%

A school	10	0.66%
Another organisation - please provide details.	21	1.38%
Other	62	4.08%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Please provide further details here, if relevant.

There were 250 responses to this part of the question.

6: What is your gender?

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Male	319	20.99%
Female	1157	76.12%
Prefer not to say	28	1.84%
I use another term	16	1.05%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

7: Do you agree with the purpose of the Bill?

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	1479	97.30%
No	33	2.17%
Unsure	8	0.53%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Do you have any further comments?

There were 456 responses to this part of the question.

Comments (grouped by response) can be found below.

8: Do you foresee any unintended consequences of the Bill?

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	96	6.32%
No	1330	87.50%
Unsure	94	6.18%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

If you have answered 'yes', please provide details

There were 133 responses to this part of the question.

Comments (grouped by response) can be found below.

9: Do you think Clause 1 will have the effects that are anticipated?

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
I believe Clause 1 will have all the anticipated effects.	1390	91.45%
I believe Clause 1 will have some of the anticipated effects.	93	6.12%
I believe Clause 1 won't have the anticipated effects.	24	1.58%
Unsure	13	0.86%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

If you have answered that Clause 1 will only have some of the anticipated effects, or won't have the anticipated effects, please provide details.

There were 91 responses to this part of the question.

Comments (grouped by response) can be found below.

10: It is appropriate for the DE to also publish its guidelines on school uniforms.

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	1080	71.05%
Agree	278	18.29%
Neither agree nor disagree	95	6.25%
Disagree	13	0.86%
Strongly disagree	14	0.92%
Don't know	40	2.63%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Do you have any further comments?

There were 120 responses to this part of the question.

Comments (grouped by response) can be found below.

11: Do you have any comments on Clause 3?

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	198	13.03%
No	1322	86.97%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

If you have answered 'yes', please provide details.

There were 138 responses to this part of the question.

Comments (grouped by response) can be found below.

12: The financial effects of the Bill will be minimal. (See Paragraphs 19 and 20 of the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum.)

There were 1520 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	1057	69.54%
Agree	284	18.68%
Neither agree nor disagree	107	7.04%
Disagree	19	1.25%
Strongly disagree	13	0.86%
Don't know	40	2.63%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Do you have any further comments?

There were 126 responses to this part of the question.

Comments (grouped by response) can be found below.

13: Additional comments and observations

There were 447 responses to this part of the question.

Comments can be found below.

School Uniforms (Trousers) Bill – Citizen Space comments

Comments submitted under questions 7 to 13 are listed below, and are grouped by response (yes, no etc.).

7: Do you agree with the purpose of the Bill?

Yes – 441 comments
A law ensuring that all pupils can choose to wear trousers would be a straightforward matter of practical equality, removing an outdated restriction that serves no educational purpose while causing discomfort for many students. It wouldn't force anyone to abandon skirts but would simply end a policy where schools treat students differently based on gender, allowing each child to wear what's most comfortable and practical for them. The change costs nothing, harms no one, and aligns school dress codes with modern understanding that arbitrary gender-based restrictions belong in the past. Such a law would signal that schools exist to educate all children effectively, not to enforce traditional gender norms that make some students' daily experience unnecessarily difficult. Girls shouldn't have to worry about modesty during normal school activities like sitting cross-legged or during playtimes. Trousers are warmer and more practical in cold weather too. But at the end of the day, the bottom line is, if boys aren't required to wear restrictive or gendered clothing, why should girls be?
about time.
Absolute no brainer - why is this even a topic for debate?!
Absolutely insane that this hasn't already been done. How are we teaching children about equality when it's insisted they wear clothes clearly striking a difference. This is not expected of adults in the workplace or any professional setting so shouldn't be expected in schools. The practicality and efficiency of wearing skirts and tights also affects ability to comfortably learn. As a parent and primary teacher, Northern Ireland is seriously behind in many areas involving education, this is one that can be easily fixed and applauded.
All children and young people should be able to wear trousers if they find it more comfortable. That this is even up for debate in 2026 is shocking. Pass the bill - give CYP the choice.
All children regardless of gender should be permitted to wear trousers/leg coverings if it makes them more comfortable. I genuinely cannot believe this has to be a debate in 2026.
All girls should be allowed to wear clothes that make them feel comfortable, adult women are not required to wear skirts so why should we force this on children.
All girls should get the choice of the type of bottom they wear. Whether it is for comfort, function or to brave bad weather, to more serious reasons or feeling safe, less chance of being harassed or sexualised.
All girls should have the option on whether or not they chose to wear trousers, it is their decision it should not be at the will of a principal if it's available to them or not. Girls can feel more comfortable and safe wearing trousers for many reasons. There are no reasons why having the option to wear trousers could be detrimental.
All pupils regardless of gender must be allowed to wear trousers if they want to. No one other than the pupil and possibly their parent has any right to dictate otherwise.
All pupils regardless of gender should be allowed to wear trousers. This protects young girls and teens. In 2026 how is there not equality yet?
All pupils should be able to wear trousers and should have always been able to wear trousers to school.
All pupils should be able to wear trousers if they wish
All pupils should be permitted to wear school trousers.
All pupils should be permitted to wear whatever makes them feel comfortable. Clothes are not gender specific.
All pupils should be treated equally, male or female .

All pupils should have access to trousers / tracksuit bottoms / shorts if that is what they prefer and makes them most comfortable. Pupils comfort should be the primary consideration in school uniform followed closely by availability and cost to parents.
All pupils should have the choice to wear trousers to school. Forcing pupils to wear skirts where they may not be comfortable is backward, and draconian. This change is well overdue.
All pupils should have the right to chose
All pupils should have the right to wear trousers, no matter their gender. Whether it is for religious reasons, medical or personal. It is still within the uniform guidelines
All students deserve equality
All students should have freedom of choice
Allowing all pupils to wear trousers will not hinder on their learning. They should be able to choose whatever uniform they feel comfortable in. This kind of inequality should not exist in 2026.
Allowing students to wear trousers as part of a uniform reflects the normalities of current society. There are reasons beyond style as to why one might choose to wear trousers.
Although I agree with the purpose of the Bill, I think it doesn't go far enough. In my opinion, what constitutes appropriate dress should be defined irrespective of gender. This means that boys would be allowed, if they so choose, to wear dresses or skirts.
Although I find it incredible in 2026 that girls wearing trousers to school is somehow an issue .
Any young person who wishes to wear trousers to school should be allowed to do so no matter their gender or biological sex.
Anyone trying to stop people from wearing trousers in school needs their head examined.
Anyone who does not agree should be investigated as a potential predator. It is ridiculous that this is an issue.
Anyone who thinks that school children should be forced to wear skirts, is a pedophile.
There is nothing further to elaborate on.
Are we still living in the dark ages that a Bill is required "to permit all pupils to wear trousers as part of their school uniform"? When you say all pupils you now mean females are to be included. This is blatant discrimination against one section of our school population that still continues into the 21st century. The education minister, politicians and education providers have a legal duty of care to all their students (to protect the health, safety, and well-being of students). Forcing girls to wear skirts in freezing weather violates a school's obligation to safeguard their student's health.
as a child i was in school and identifying as transgender [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] so i feel strongly that everyone should be allowed to wear what they feel comfortable in as it doesn't affect the education of our children whatsoever with what they're wearing on their legs.
As a Father to two teenagers, I let my children make practical choices on what they wear day to day and I don't see how this should not extend to school.
I have daughter that will be starting school in September, so this law change will directly affect my family. My daughter will be happy to be able to wear trousers. She is body conscious at her age and does not need to have her clothing choices dictated to her.
As a female, I remember being forced to wear skirts myself to school. During the menstrual cycle you feel more secure in trousers.

██████████ since having to wear a skirt every day made me extremely dysphoric and in all honestly majorly contributed to the reason for my high school years genuinely being the worst years of my life. Because due to my high school being extremely religious i was too scared to come out, and i believe even if i had i would have still been forced to wear a skirt, i believe this bill would make so many children more comfortable in school, ██████████

As a woman who was forced to wear skirts as part of my school uniform, this I long overdue. Harsh winters spent with exposed knees turning blue combined with the risk of pervy students and teachers trying to cop a look has ensured I have never worn a skirt again.

Now I have my own daughter I don't want her to have the same terrible experience

As a woman who was harassed by boys, trying to lift my skirt, disgusting grown men commenting on my legs, being extremely uncomfortable during my period in a skirt and also being absolutely FREEZING on windy days it's genuinely disturbing that girls are still expected to wear a skirt.

I'm now 45 and I despised this stupidity and sexism in the 90s and still despise it now. Girls should feel both comfortable and safe. If they want to wear a skirt great. If they want to wear trousers great.

Being forced to wear skirts, dresses to attend school, and athletic shorts (that were effectively just uniform coloured pants) to participate in PE sessions drastically effected my body image, my view of my peers and people in positions of authority as well as the effort and concentration i was able to commit to lessons.

For example, if I'd have had the option to wear appropriate legs coverings as a teenager in PE, I might have actually wanted to participate fully in lessons rather than spending the whole time self conscious and avoidant.

If I'd have had the option to wear trousers as part of my main school uniform I would potentially not have been subject to sequel harassment from both boys my own age, but also grown adult men from about the age of 13.

I want better for my daughter.

I have been working professionally for more than 20 years. Not once have I had to or chosen to wear a skirt or dress. And not wearing a skirt or dress has had no negative impact in my performance at work. To expect your girls to wear skirts against their wishes is archaic and I would be interested to hear any rationale argument why it is necessary in 2026.

Both males and females should be allowed to wear trousers. It's ridiculous that in 2026, this is still not the case for all schools

But honestly couldn't care less and don't know why they need opinions for this it is such a waste of time when there giving people opinions

But it should never have gotten to this

By allowing all pupils the option to wear trousers as part of their school uniform helps promote equality, inclusion and choice. It recognises that pupils have different needs, preferences, cultural backgrounds and physical comfort requirements, allowing them to wear clothing that enables them to participate confidently in school life. Offering trousers as an option can improve comfort during learning and play, support modesty where desired, and ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged or excluded because of a restrictive uniform policy. Additionally, by allowing all pupils the autonomy to choose if they wear trousers or other suitable leg covering you will likely see an increase in attendance and subsequently an increase in grade passes achieved, due to pupils feeling more confident and comfortable to engage in learning. Maslow's hierarchy of needs has comfort at the very base level that anyone needs to reach before they are able to progress to a learning stage. We ensure that children and young people have access the food options through breakfast clubs, have a recommended amount of sleep, recommended amount of water but currently we are not ensuring they are comfortable in their own clothing. Allowing autonomy also better prepares pupils for the world of work as a large majority of workplaces do not enforce a uniform but rather a dress code where staff are able to wear what they are comfortable in as long as it still presents them and the company well. Small instances where children and young people can express their identity and individuality will also have positive influences on managing challenging behaviours within our schools.

Cannot believe this wasn't sorted 20+ years ago

Children regardless of gender, have a right to wear trousers. I find it rather alarming that to this day, adults have decided that young girls should wear skirts. Given the level of paedophilic behaviour in our society today, this bill needs to go through to ensure the dignity of our young women in education is not compromised

Children should be allowed to wear skirts or trousers, as they choose. Gender should not be part of this decision.

CiNI supports the principle of the School Uniforms (Trousers) Bill. At its heart, this is a simple children's rights issue: children and young people should not be denied a reasonable choice about what they wear to school where that choice affects their dignity, comfort, privacy and ability to participate fully in school life.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires that children's best interests are a primary consideration in decisions affecting them (Article 3), that their views are given due weight (Article 12), and that their rights are secured without discrimination (Article 2). The Convention also protects children's privacy and dignity and their right to participate fully in education.

The evidence heard during the development of the Bill is particularly important. Girls and young women have described how compulsory skirts can affect their comfort, confidence and freedom of movement, including during menstruation, active play, outdoor learning and travel to school. Where children themselves identify a straightforward way of removing these barriers, their views should carry significant weight.

CiNI does not regard this as an argument against school uniform or school identity. Schools can retain a uniform while ensuring that the choices within it do not unnecessarily restrict children because of their sex. Nor should a child in Northern Ireland have to campaign within their own school for a basic, reasonable accommodation that is routinely available to pupils in other jurisdictions.

The Bill therefore establishes an important principle: the interests and dignity of the child should take precedence over tradition or convention where no compelling justification exists for restricting their choice.

Giving every pupil the right to wear trousers is a modest intervention, but for those currently denied that choice it can have a meaningful impact on equality, dignity, participation and everyday school experience.

Come on it's 2026, pupils/parents should be allowed to decide what leg covering their children wear to school.

Comfort and equality should come first.

Daughters school changes uniform skirt style every 2 years, this restriction is not placed on trousers. Skirts have a sole supplier, generic black trousers can be picked up in a supermarket, price differential is crazy

During my time in secondary school we were forever being told to pull down our skirts (even when they were knee length as per uniform policy) by the teachers and staff. We weren't allowed to take our jumpers off on warm days as we were a 'distraction to the boys and remember to keep your knees closed' - direct quote from the headmistress walking around the grounds. This wasn't in the 50's or 60's but in the late 90's / early 2000's.

On cold days we had to wear cream tight, which aren't that warm and then were reprimanded when there was mud japs up our calves.

All the while the boys were able to run, skip, jump and sit without complaint in their trousers. They were allowed their jumpers off on warm days cos they didn't wear bras under their shirts (maybe an equality consideration for later!

😞🤦).

And as their weren't wearing cream trousers they weren't being told off for japs up their calves!

It's only fair that girls are given the option if or when they want to wear skirts! There is no longer an unwritten rule that women wear skirts throughout their lives, so it seems a bit draconian to implement that status in our schools especially while the teachers are trying to develop our kids viewpoints.

While kids may complain about wearing uniforms, they will learn throughout adulthood that having to decide on an outfit and what's for dinner will quickly become the two most detested task of their daily lives. The simplicity of having your outfit chosen already and having everyone on the same level is still a great (though ridiculously expensive) idea. But equality needs to be applied as well.

If the schools are going to charge an absolute fortune for their specific branded uniform then the least they can do is to make the kids comfortable.

And in case anyone tries to say it - No trousers won't 'turn' the girls gay! That's genetics, not fabric! Thanks you
Equality Comfort
Every child needs to come to school as ready to learn as possible. As comfortable as possible, and as safe as possible.
Every child should be able to attend school without worrying about their underwear showing! Trousers are acceptable in workplaces for women so there is no reason why young girls cannot wear them.
Every girl should have the right to wear trousers.
Everyone no matter their gender should have the right to wear what makes them feel comfortable in school. It should be their choice to wear a skirt not what the government imposes upon them.
Everyone should have the choice to wear trousers or not. A girl may feel may comfortable in trousers due to weight, chaffing, periods, cold.
Everyone should have the right to wear school trousers as part of their school uniforms, in a lot of schools only boys are allowed to wear trousers and girls are required to wear skirts which should not be the case. We all have the right to feel comfortable within ourselves and not being permitted to wear trousers denies lots of girls around the country this fundamental right. Young people should be treated equally in schools meaning they should all be allowed to wear trousers.
Female children should not be discriminated against due to their gender. Trousers are comfortable, warm and ensure their dignity. There is a cost factor here also as opaque tights are expensive and require replacing regularly. Girls would be more than happy to wear legging style trousers.
Female pupils should be allowed to wear trousers. Many of the loudest opponents of this bill are middle aged or old men, who presumably have never been forced to wear a skirt in all weather. Their vehement opposition begs the question, why are men who will be completely unaffected by this bill, so concerned with being able to see the legs of schoolgirls?
Female teachers can wear trousers in the colder weather so why can't the female pupils? It's an old fashioned concept and I can remember at school having to try to cover my legs (we weren't allowed to wear tights) as some old male teachers made you feel very uncomfortable with the staring. All pupils should be treated equal. No tights in summer! Shorts in summer too!
Female teachers, politicians and workers of all kinds wear trousers. Practical and comfortable item of clothing and so old fashioned and pointlessly restrictive not to allow girls to do the same.
Females should be allowed to wear warm, comfortable clothing including trousers if desired
Find it ridiculous some schools still require girls to wear skirts. The idea of having to tell a child in the midst of winter they can't cover up is just maddening.
For the comfort and safety of girls.
For the rule to be fair and just, the sex of a pupil should not be taken into consideration. If trousers and skirts are the two options available then any pupil, male or female should be able to select either option.
Forcing girls to wear trousers is wrong on all counts

Forcing young girls to wear skirts enforces archaic gender roles, restricts freedom of movement (I as a young girl refused to participate in sports out of fear of my skirt lifting up), exposes them to the cold in the winter months (a core memory all girls have is layering multiple pairs of thin, uncomfortable tights in a futile attempt to stay warm) and leaves them vulnerable to unwanted harassment. To illustrate my last point, I will confess to the fact that when I was [REDACTED] when he dove to the ground to try to look up my skirt. This was not an isolated incident.

When I reached [REDACTED] my extreme discomfort with wearing skirts was well known to my parents. I dreaded wearing my uniform as it made me feel uncomfortable and unsafe. This discomfort bled into my extracurricular life, where I stopped wearing princess dresses or sparkly skirts as I now associated them with that exact discomfort.

It was around this time that my mother [REDACTED] I wasn't aware of this at the time; I just began wearing trousers to school one day and the change in my demeanour was immediate. I played sports, I wasn't afraid of my classmates trying to peep on me. I was confident and I was comfortable. This is what all little girls deserve: the opportunity to my comfortable and safe in their place of education.

Full support

Gender should never dictate clothes you are forced to wear.

Get it done! It's madness than you require a consultation!

Get this bill passed! A disgrace that girls do not have this right already. Someone should take legal action against you. I was a girl forced to wear a skirt everyday to school. Boys feeling our legs and commenting that we needed to shave, skirts pulled up and looked up getting into the school bus. Freezing in winter. Restrictive and not practical either. Then the PE skirts as well. Young girls given no choice but to display most of their bodies and risk exposing themselves during sports. I question anyone who opposes this. For some outdated view of femininity? Or to show girls that those in authority still control how they look? Anyone who wants to wear a skirt still can, you only add rights and don't take them away.

Girls and young women must have the right to and the choice to wear trousers and shorts as part of their school uniform.

Girls at primary school should have the choice of trousers.

Girls cannot partake in play or break time sport in skirts
Children with autism can be sensory sensitive to skirts

Girls deserve the choice to wear clothes in which they feel comfortable and confident in educational settings.

Girls have the right to feel safe and comfortable at school. This shouldn't be a debate in 2026

Girls have the right to wear trousers, winter can be cold enough on Girls

Girls must be given the right to wear trousers. I work with adults who were abused as children & the school skirt made it easier for abusers to abuse them. Also, as young girls grapple with the experience of having periods it's important that they have an opportunity to feel more comfortable in trousers.

Girls should also be allowed to wear socks instead of tights as my kids school only allows tights all year round.

Girls should be able to wear trousers to school. Not just in winter

Girls should be allowed to wear trousers especially as they have periods. Also to protect their privacy. Even teacher dress casual these days. I work in a school also.

Girls should be allowed to wear trousers for
Warmth
Modesty
Protection, especially during their monthly periods
Freedom of movement, especially for outdoor play.

Girls should be allowed to wear trousers if they feel more comfortable in them than skirts

Girls should be allowed to wear trousers in school for many reasons e.g Comfort. Freedom of movement. They make it easier to run, play sports, and take part in activities. Weather related. Trousers can keep students warmer in cold weather and provide more coverage. Equality. Girls should have the same choice of school uniform as boys. Practicality. Trousers are less likely to ride up or restrict movement during everyday school activities. Short skirts has been a long standing issue in schools, why does an old man want to keep the girls in skirts? Confidence. Having a choice can help students feel more comfortable and confident at school. Allowing girls to wear trousers is a fair and practical choice that promotes comfort, equality, and freedom of movement.
Girls should be allowed to wear trousers to permit dignity and equality
Girls should be allowed to wear trousers to school.
Girls should be given a choice when it comes to school uniform. It is a matter of dignity, comfort and consideration. Their voices should be heard or you are telling young girls that they are not worth listening to
Girls should feel comfortable in school. They should have a right to choose what they wear.
Girls should have the option to wear trousers.
Girls should have the option to wear trousers. Common sense should prevail. Men should not have a deciding vote on girls uniforms. For modesty, heat and medical reasons girls should decide themselves without explaining why they are wearing trousers.
Girls should not have to fight for their rights to human decency. Wearing a skirt to school does not make them perform academically. As a matter of fact children perform better when they are more comfortable at school. They are allowed to wear p.e trousers on physical days so why not everyday?
Girls should not have to put up with being treated differently. Being comfortable is really important in a learning environment and girls' everyday comfort as well as comfort during menstruation should not be ignored or dismissed by male ministers due to their archaic views on tradition. It's incredibly disrespectful. School uniforms were previously seen as preparing children for the workplace, yet workplaces no longer require women to wear skirts. Sportswear in schools should be based on comfort (including warmth), breatheability and freedom of movement.
Great and necessary choice in 2026, thank you
Having went to Secondary school in 1970s where it was deemed ok for badly brought up boys to behave inappropriately towards their fellow female classmates it's a shame we are in the 21st century and are still fighting for basic respect for girls
Honestly can't believe in the year 2026 we are debating this. Let kids have autonomy over their bodies! It's that simple.
How is it still a question as to whether girls can wear trousers? Various reasons why this should be allowed include staying warm in winter, being comfortable when on period, not being subjected to boys up skirting. Surely the aim of school is to learn, everyone will learn better when they are warm, comfortable and relaxed in their environment. This should be the only priority, and I'd question the reasons for people wanting to see young girls and teens in skirts, what are they gaining from this? I also like to see uniforms in general become more relaxed, most adults, even those in professional situations are able to dress in a much more casual way now.
How is this even a debate in 2026. How much resource is being put into this when it shouldn't even be an issue.
I agree because I feel that in 2026, pupils and parents should have the choice as to whether they wear skirt/tunic or trousers. One of the purposes of uniform is to prepare kids for sticking to the rules in an adult job, part of which might involve wearing a uniform. I have never seen an adult job where employees can't choose between a skirt or trousers. The other main purpose of a uniform is to make pupils equal and reduce bullying but it trousers are a part of the uniform then that shouldn't be an issue.

I agree that girls should be allowed to wear trousers as part of their main school uniform, and trousers, shorts, skirts, or any other leg covering for their PE uniform if they chose. I also think this bill should be extended to allow boys to wear skirts and shorts as part of their main school uniform, and trousers, skirts, shorts, or any other leg coverings as part of their PE uniform if they chose.

Clothes are clothes, and sizing aside they're not specifically for boys, girls, men, or women. Anyone can and should be allowed to wear any item of clothing.

I agree that this Bill promotes equality of choice and the right to comfort at school - FOR ALL PUPILS. Helping children reach their FULL POTENTIAL in accordance with the curriculum, should be the focus for educators and a contented, secure, comfortable school child will learn better, engage more meaningfully and focus on what matters at school, helping each child to achieve their full potential. . There is no valid, reasonable or practical rationale for precluding girls from wearing trousers at school. We live in a modern society - it's time to reflect this in our schools.

I am disgusted that the Minister did not amend his guidance and that the Speaker did not select this amendment for debate which has caused extra work and cost for the Assembly. However, I am grateful that the Committee has taken this forward.

I am for girls wearing trousers in school. Especially in the winter months!

I am responding because I spent 7 years in school being forced to wear skirts and shorts. The bullying, the embarrassment and shame still lingers to this day.

I am shocked that this even still needs to be a question. I would question the motivations of those against it.

I am shocked this isn't a part of the uniform policy for all schools already!
I'm glad it is for the schools my children attend.

I believe all children and young people should have the right to wear trousers or shorts as appropriate to school, without having to seek special permission from the school first, regardless of sex, gender or religion.

I believe all pupils should be permitted to wear either trousers or skirts regardless of their gender at birth. This should be a choice taken by the pupil/parents. This bill has to be equal for everyone.

I believe all pupils should have freedom of choice; skirt, trousers or shorts no matter gender.

I believe all students have the right to wear trousers and specifying skirts only for girls is sexist, misogynistic and discriminatory. I believe this bill is overdue and schools should be more focused on the quality of teaching and less on what is on the bottom half of the children they teach.

I believe every individual should be able to wear what they want at school whether it's a skirt or trousers.

I believe it is extremely unfair that female students must go through the process to request to be able to wear trousers. And then face the risk of being denied by senior staff of their school.

I believe that forcing girls and women to wear anything that exposes any part of their body against their will is very unsettling and I'd be very confident that anyone who opposes the bill is probably a rather unsavoury character. Sexist and oppressive at the least and a dangerous predator at worst. There is no justification for it that can't be countered with common sense.

Even putting aside the bizarre stance that children should bare their legs against their will, trousers are a more practical all weather option.

All students regardless of gender should have the choice to wear any garment considered uniform if they are to be forced to wear a uniform at all. There should not be a separate uniform for male and female

I believe that forcing girls to wear a skirt in this day and age is inappropriate and not practical.

I believe that it should be the pupils' right to choose whether they would like to wear trousers or a skirt. Honestly I believe that it is ridiculous that a Bill is required to be passed in order to allow for this to happen. What a pupil chooses to wear will not impact their education or learning in any way but giving them the opportunity to choose will let the pupils feel happier, content, more comfortable and more secure.

I believe that the requirement for girls and AFAB students to wear skirts is outdated, unnecessary and sexist

I can't believe in this day and age this is still up for debate. I began my teaching career in England in 2003 and the girls were permitted to wear trousers.

I can't believe it's 2026 and this is still an issue

I can't believe this has not been put in place sooner. As a young girl I would have been a lot more comfortable in trousers during my period and in winter time
I cannot believe it has come to this!
I cannot believe that a bill is required in the first place. It is absolutely ridiculous that a girl cannot chose to wear trousers to school when ever she wishes . What century are we living?
I cannot believe that this is even up for debate. This is one simple change that would allow a more equitable school experience girls alongside their male schoolmates. Why should girls be forced to wear clothing that can be more exposing to the elements of our cold Irish winters? Tights and skirts are uncomfortable, distracting and cumbersome. Trousers enable free movement and warmth. There is no rational reason (to me) as to why girls should continue to be made to enforceably wear skirts for the duration of their childhood, at a pivotal time where the focus should be on learning (and environments that support it). As a now middle aged woman who is long past school age, you couldn't pay me to go through the discomfort of the skirt + tights + shorts under the skirt to hold up the falling-down tights combo that I endured for years. And yet my male counterparts didn't have to bother their heads with it. Time for wholesale change.
I cannot believe that this question even has to be asked in the 21st century
I cant believe in 2026 that we are having to have this discussion.
I can't believe it is 2026 and girls still can't wear trousers in school. Its complete madness that this is even needing to be debated.
I can't believe this is actually up for debate in 2026. This is 2026 not 1826!! Of course young women should be allowed to wear trousers to school. To suggest otherwise is ridiculous and shameful. Why would a young woman ever be required to wear a skirt at school or in the workplace! It should be a choice. If this change is not made (and it is long overdue,) it will amount to another prime example of everyday sexism affecting women and girls in Northern Ireland. I would like to know the ratio of men and women who are actually the decision makers on this!!
I can't believe this is even a question! Let girls wear trousers!
I completely agree with the purpose of this bill because ensuring that girls can choose to wear trousers as part of their school uniform is fundamentally about fairness, dignity, and equal access. Allowing trousers removes outdated gender restrictions, supports comfort and safety, and recognises that pupils learn best when they feel confident and respected. This change doesn't undermine school standards; it simply ensures that uniform policies reflect modern equality expectations and the lived reality of young people in Northern Ireland.
I didn't realise this wasn't the law -- the idea that schools can enforce gender-segregated uniforms to such an extend is ridiculous to me.
I do in principal support the bill. As long as it's for ordinary school uniform as in most cases girls can wear leggings/tracksuit bottoms for PE.
I do not think there should be gender specific rules regarding school uniform. I don't see how it affects anyone's education if a girl wears trousers. In fact, it may affect her education if she is uncomfortable wearing a skirt.
I don't see how any child wanting to wear trousers male or female for whatever reason has any impact whatsoever on any of these decision makers. It's appalling that it's even up for debate
I don't see why this is even a question! It's 2026 it should go without saying that all pupils should be allowed to wear trousers
I dont think it goes far enough. Girls should indeed be allowed to wear trousers. Boys should be allowed to wear shorts. We have seen numerous reports of boys wearing skirts in protest of having to wear trousers during the heatwaves. Uniforms should be modernised to reflect the world we now live in. Historically it was to prepare the workforce of the future for industry / factory work (as is the whole model of schooling in general eg uniform, discipline, following orders and less about individual thought/expression). Now look to today, Tradesmen no longer wear a shirt and tie, and office wear has become much more casual. Factory workers often wear PPE. In my opinion everyone should be allowed to wear t-shirts/polo shirt and zip up jacket. Ties should be scrapped. If my school spent less time worrying about how its pupils were dressed and more time tackling bullying and mental health concerns, academic outcomes among protestant boys, relationships and sexual education etc it would have been a better experience. Formal uniform in general just seems pointless, those that will get a job wearing a suit and tie will likey go to university where there is no

uniform, those who dont go to university likely will never wear a uniform or if they do it will be much more relaxed/informal/PPE orientated. Also think of all the mums (and some dads) spending Sunday evening ironing!
I don't think there should be any restrictions on what people can wear,
I feel girls should have the option of wearing trousers. I think it is very outdated, and not practical to enforce girls wearing skirts to school
I feel that all pupils should be allowed to wear trousers irrespective of gender. I also feel that this piece of legislation wouldn't be required if the Education Minister had done his job right when the uniform was looked at previously. This is an equality issue.
I feel the stance forcing young females to wear skirts without any other option is outdated, immodest and irresponsible for senior members of the education party. I feel that offering the option for trousers, as modelled by female professionals, allows young females an opportunity to feel comfortable in their uniform while granting them a greater opportunity to learn in the classroom environment.
I feel there should not have to be a Bill for a girl to wear trousers to school. It ia ridiculous. A whole drama over a simple choice of clothing. I feel this is another step in women's safety which I welcome, but why are we again putting things in place to as a safety measure and not tackling the actual problem of sexual assault and perpetrators walking free.
I feel very strongly that it is utterly barbaric that male politicians of a party that had a paedophile at there helm for such a long period, would take an issue with young girls being allowed to preserve their dignity by wearing trousers to school. Wearing trousers protects girls from up-skirting, it removes the temptation to up-skirt from boys. Wearing trousers is a more comfortable option, especially during a girls menstrual cycle. Worrying about movement, skirts pulling/blowing up, adds an extra stress to children's learning. Why should this extra stress only be added to girls ?
I find it astonishing that we have to even discuss whether or not both boys and girls should be allowed to wear trousers.
I find it hard to believe that this even has to be discussed and legislation changed in the 21st century particularly with the levels of violence and sexual harrassment against girls which is happening not just in schools but across society
I find it incredible that in 2026 a Bill is still required to provide all children with the right to wear trousers to school regardless of gender. Girls and young women should be able to wear trousers and leg covering garments during PE, without it needing to be passed as legislation. I grew up in an age where schools could insist that girls had to run track in a tshirt and essentially pants. I know as a teenage girl this made me personally feel self conscious and as if my body was on show without my permission. It's about time the system gave females some respect
I find it incredibly strange that this matter requires legislation. Given that it mostly impacts girls I find it depressing in 2026, that for girls to have freedom of choice reference their clothing it has to be a legal matter.
I find it mortifying that this is even a matter for public consultation in this day and age. What is anyone worried about? What disadvantages could there possibly be to all children having the right to wear trousers to school?! Having said that, if it takes a consultation to get us to that point, then I am grateful for the opportunity to have my voice heard.
I fully support girls being given the choice as to wear school trousers if they wish to. It's something I wish I had the choice of when I was in school for a variety of reasons.
I fully support the Bill. This should apply across the board, from nursery through to high school. All pupils should have the choice to wear trousers as part of their school uniform. Trousers provide greater physical comfort, practical coverage and personal dignity, as well as providing better warmth in cold and wet weather. This would give pupils greater choice and equality and would be a simple and practical change for schools to make.
I fully support the bodily autonomy of all school pupils to wear what they feel is necessary for them to attend school and receive an education without hindrance.
I fully support the element of choice and permitting all students to wear trousers if they feel more comfortable. The need for girls to wear skirts is outdated and should not be imposed as the only option.

I fully support the purpose of this Bill. However, it is difficult to understand why, in 2026, legislation is still required to ensure that all schools allow girls the option of wearing trousers as part of their school uniform.

Schools should be committed to upholding the principles of equality, safeguarding, dignity, and inclusion for all pupils. Uniform policies should reflect these values by providing appropriate choices that support pupils' comfort, wellbeing, and safety.

I hope this Bill will ensure that all schools adopt fair and inclusive uniform policies, so that no pupil is disadvantaged or denied the opportunity to attend school in clothing that enables them to participate fully, comfortably, and with dignity.

I fully support this Bill. In simple terms, I believe every pupil should have the same choice when it comes to their school uniform, including being able to wear trousers if they want to.

As a parent of daughters, I think it is important that they feel comfortable, confident and able to choose what they wear. Not every child feels comfortable wearing a skirt, and there is no good reason why girls should be expected to wear one when boys have the option of trousers.

Trousers can also be more practical for everyday school life, particularly in cold or wet weather, and for taking part in sports and outdoor activities. Giving all pupils the option of appropriate clothing allows them to concentrate on school rather than worrying about whether their uniform is comfortable or suitable for the activity they are doing. Most importantly, I believe school uniform should be about equality and practicality, rather than restricting children based on their gender. Giving every pupil the same choices is a simple and fair approach, and I fully support it.

I grew up in Scotland where having trousers as an option is the default in almost all schools, and it never caused any issues at all.

I have a daughter. It's 2026. If the most appropriate attire for the day is a pair of trousers, that is what she should be able to wear. Let's be honest, if the economy keeps going the way it does, some people will be priced out of the market anyway, so in my opinion it is a moot point as uniforms will not be around forever. There is no reason to force a girl to wear a skirt instead of trousers. That does not in any way benefit the child.

I have fought for this for years I am 58 year old grandmother and I believe girls should have the same rights as boys. Imagine in this day and age girls being made to wear skirts

I have two daughters that had no choice other than wear a skirt to school during the winter months. There must be a Choice for my granddaughter.

I personally would have greatly appreciated the ability to wear trousers as my uniform. Education should be the priority and a pupil's discomfort inhibits their ability to focus on their education.

i remember campaigning for this at school 40 years ago. i CANNOT believe we are still fighting for wardrobe equality in 2026.

I see no logical reason to not agree with the bill.

I strongly believe all pupils should have the choice.

I strongly believe that all pupils should have universal rights to wear trousers in school, and I am pleased to see this bill finally being put into effect.

I strongly believe this Bill should have come to fruition a long time ago, but understand the more prominent need for it now with so many children having [REDACTED] As a parent [REDACTED] the discomfort of uniforms was a factor in the regular meltdowns they encountered. I myself have [REDACTED] and hate wearing tights, so many a time I was left having to wear socks and a skirt on the coldest of days travelling to and from school via public transport. My daughter is now in the same boat where [REDACTED] leading to mounting, unnecessary, additional costs to parents [REDACTED]

Another factor that needs to be looked at, and why I believe this should have been addressed a long time ago, is bullying. Many young girls (including myself) have been subjected to bullying in school and being forced to wear a skirt added to the already stressful situation and heightened young people's self consciousness at a crucial part of development for self esteem.

We also find ourselves living in an age where there are an increased number of physical assaults, stalking and grooming happening to our young children. Whilst this won't solve the issue, it will add an extra layer of protection to our children by allowing them to cover up.

Lastly, I believe our children deserve the autonomy to choose what they feel most comfortable in. Some schools are still allowed to implement uniform policies in a Draconian manner to ensure children look "neat, tidy and presentable". But at what cost? Learning and appearances are two entirely separate things. Learning isn't measured by how we look, it's about what we retain from our teachers and our lessons. If children are comfortable and supported in their autonomy this should surely have a positive impact on learning outcomes which is the whole point of school. Not keeping up appearances.

I strongly support the purpose of this Bill. My daughter is due to start Primary 1 in September and we tried on her new school uniform this week. Girls are required to wear a kilt, while boys are permitted to wear trousers. She became very upset and asked me repeatedly why she wasn't allowed to wear trousers. I genuinely couldn't give her a reasonable answer.

At four/five years old, children should not be taught that their clothing choices are restricted simply because they are a boy or a girl. If trousers are considered smart, practical and appropriate school uniform for boys, they should be equally appropriate for girls.

This is also particularly important for children with additional or sensory needs, for whom certain clothing can cause genuine discomfort or distress. Uniform policies should allow children to feel comfortable, secure and able to participate fully in their school day.

Allowing all pupils the option of trousers does not take anything away from pupils who are happy wearing skirts or kilts. It simply gives every child the same choice.

I strongly support this proposal. It is difficult to understand why this is something we need legislation to address in 2026.

Trousers are not "boys' clothes" and skirts are not "girls' clothes". Women routinely wear trousers in professional workplaces, with no general expectation that they should wear skirts simply because they are women. So why impose that outdated distinction on schoolgirls?

Uniform should be practical, affordable, safe and suitable for school — not a way of enforcing gender stereotypes.

There are practical reasons girls may prefer trousers. Menstruation, cold and wet weather, physical activity and simply feeling comfortable throughout a long school day can all make trousers preferable. A girl should not have to choose between complying with a gendered uniform rule and wearing something in which she feels comfortable and secure.

If there is evidence that requiring girls to wear skirts rather than giving them the same clothing choices as boys improves academic achievement, behaviour, wellbeing or participation, I would like to see it. Where is the research showing that segregating uniform or maintaining stereotypical gender norms benefits children?

The Committee itself recognises that uniform can affect physical comfort, dignity, safety, self-esteem and participation. Surely the logical response is to give pupils appropriate choices.

It is concerning when adults who are not personally affected by these rules prioritise preserving skirts over the comfort and autonomy of the young people who have to wear them. We should be moving away from policing girls' clothing, not reinforcing outdated expectations about how girls should dress.

I am not arguing that girls should be forced to wear trousers. I am arguing for choice. If a girl wants to wear a skirt, she should be able to. If she wants to wear trousers, she should be able to.

Uniform standards should not be gendered. They should be based on practical school requirements, not outdated stereotypes.
I struggle to understand the reason why this is being considered and not already policy, without further money being utilised to make a decision on this. We are no longer in the 19th century, where the decision originated? At a time when it was considered cultural and societal norm for girls to wear skirts. There was also an elitest aspect to the decision given the decision for private school children to wear such attire. Our society and culture have changed, and as reported repeatedly, there is a concerning rise in bullying, gender specific targeting, along with masculinity and what it means to be a man or boy feeding into cultures around the world which is unhealthy and unjust. Girls should be allowed to wear what makes them comfortable, helps them to feel safer, less of a target for the attention of others. Practicalities also are that the trousers are more comfortable, warmer and help with emotional and psychological safety when it comes to girls menstrual cycles and reducing the fear of being seen.
I support the bill that girls should be allowed to wear trousers to school because every student should feel comfortable, confident and equal in what they wear. Trousers can be more practical and comfortable than skirts, especially during cold or wet weather, and they allow girls to move around freely. I also believe that girls should have the same choices as boys when it comes to school uniforms. Allowing girls to wear trousers gives them more freedom while still keeping a smart and appropriate school uniform.
I support this Bill because it promotes fairness, comfort, and equality for all pupils while allowing schools to maintain appropriate uniform standards. No child should feel restricted by outdated uniform rules that limit clothing choices based on gender. Allowing every pupil to wear trousers gives students the freedom to choose the option that best suits their comfort, personal circumstances, and practical needs without removing the option of skirts for those who prefer them. This change is particularly important during recreational, sporting, and outdoor activities. Trousers or other appropriate leg coverings provide better protection from cold weather, rough terrain, insect bites, sun exposure, and minor injuries. They also allow pupils to participate more confidently in physical activities without worrying about discomfort or modesty, encouraging greater inclusion and participation. The Bill also recognises that some pupils have religious, cultural, medical, or sensory needs that make trousers or appropriate leg coverings the most suitable choice. Providing this flexibility ensures that school uniform policies are more inclusive and respectful of the diverse needs of today's students. Importantly, the Bill does not abolish school uniforms or prevent schools from setting reasonable standards. It simply ensures that those standards offer equal options to all pupils. This is a practical, common-sense update that reflects modern values while supporting pupils wellbeing, dignity, safety, and ability to learn. For these reasons, I strongly support the Bill and believe it represents a positive step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable school environment for every child.
I think attempts to limit what leg wear young girls are allowed to wear is misogynistic and pedophilic control of girls and young women that is beyond in the realms of acceptable modern values
I think girls should have the option of wearing trousers to school. They are by far more practical and warmer. I remember my school days of wearing the terrible school skirts that were so restrictive you couldn't even run in it to get out of the rain as it was so restrictive. My legs used to be freezing with the cold and the rain. Now my daughter has the same issues yrs later. It's terrible that this change is only coming about now. We shouldn't even be talking about it, it should be a given that they can wear trousers. Trousers are smart and most girls wear trousers outside of school.
I think it is ridiculous and unfair that girls are required to always wear skirts. In cold weather especially this can be uncomfortable and even harmful. But, apart from anything else, it is discriminatory and only serves to reinforce gender stereotypes in a society that should, by now, be more progressive.
I think it is ridiculous that girls should be discriminated in this way
I think it is very poor form that any school in 2026 is forcing girls to wear skirts
I think it should not have taken this long to be considered.
I think it's absolutely disgusting that in this year girls are not allowed to wear trousers
I think it's absolutely ridiculous that it has come to this. All children should have the choice of what to wear to school.

I think it's ridiculous that this bill even had to be brought forward, there was plenty of evidence given to the committee during the recent uniform bill and should have been included at that stage. Instead Given and his misogyny blocked it.

With upskirting a very real issue in schools the option to wear trousers also falls in line with the government's commitment to reduce violence against women and girls.

Nursing uniforms were updated to have trousers over 20 years ago because they are more practical than skirts, why are we still debating if all children should be allowed to wear trousers.

I think it's disgraceful that Mr Paul Givan did not agree to this proposal in the first place, and that it ever became necessary to go to the public expense of conducting this survey and bringing the Bill.

I think it's ridiculous in 2026 that what children wear is being dictated by old, white men. Girls have the right to wear whatever clothes they are comfortable in and should be afforded access to the same clothing options as their male counterparts. Why is this even being debated? What adult really cares this much about whether a young girl wears a skirt or trousers?

I think it's ridiculous that in 2026 we are only getting around to this Bill. Not allowing all students to wear trousers is sexist, inappropriate and to be perfectly candid, incredibly unsettling. Why wouldn't all students be allowed to wear trousers? I find it very creepy that it is being deliberated over.

I think it's ridiculous that it's taken this long for this bill to be brought forward, in this day and age girls should not be forced to wear skirts.

I think that even having to legislate for this is a disgrace and a waste of valuable assembly time and should have been included in previous legislation

I think that girls should be allowed to wear trousers that are appropriate for school if they wish. As long as the option to wear skirts is also supported for those who do not wish to wear trousers.

I think this bill is needed as currently whether or not girls can wear trousers is left to the discretion of individual schools. This means that girls are still being subjected to outdated and, in most cases, sexist uniform rules.

School is a place for learning, what a child wears should not be a barrier to their education. Girls can be made to feel uncomfortable and restricted by having to wear clothing such as skirts and tights, particularly when they would feel more comfortable and confident wearing trousers.

All children should be able to wear uniform options that allow them to feel comfortable, confident and able to focus on their studies, regardless of gender. Giving girls the choice to wear trousers would be a simple and fair step towards creating a more inclusive and modern school environment.

I think this would be better for all children, from all walks of life. It will allow parents to hand trousers down between genders, allow parents who worry about modesty during sport or break time to ensure their kids are covered up. It's a great job all round.

I want this Bill to go ahead so that all pupils can wear a uniform that makes them feel comfortable and not objectified or judged. The updated uniform policies should allow pupils to choose whether to wear a skirt or trousers so they can take part in activities without feeling self-conscious.

I was a pupil at [REDACTED] not allowed to wear trousers but instead wasted money on having to buy skirt redesigns, knee high socks, tights, etc. Wasted time having to put those on daily over my dry skin and felt uncomfortable sitting most of the day as the tights or else my own skin would to any kind of chairs. Also waste of time being lectured on skirt length as a group or having class paused to watch some other female pupil get told off etc. pointless unnecessary restrictive policy that does not match current workplace and societal mores.

I was extremely uncomfortable the entire time I was in school and had to wear a skirt. I wanted to protest, but I didn't feel like I had the support at the time. It felt like we women were being conditioned into archaic servitude with the way our uniform was policed and I hope that this can be changed for all girls in the country.

I went to school in England. There girls were permitted to wear trousers. I never wore them as a personal preference but many girls did, especially in the winter months. I can say that it didn't cause any conversation, was seen as normal and no one gave it a second thought, due to the fact that it is normal to wear trousers outside of school. I wear a mixture of trousers and dresses/skirts in my adult life and not one person has commented on it as we now live in the 21st century. Girls should have the option, especially as trousers can be more comfortable. A school uniform can still be smart with trousers.

I went to school in [REDACTED] As a child with [REDACTED] I had to try disguise leggings as tights under my school skirt in winter for warmth and comfort. I was a [REDACTED] and was so glad when I went to secondary school and couldn't finally wear trousers. My primary school a few years later allowed girls / anyone that wanted to wear trousers. Northern Ireland is very behind on allowing trousers to all who would want to wear them to school and it's frankly a disgrace.

I wholeheartedly agree with the bill.

I wholeheartedly support all pupils wearing trousers, if they wish for all the reasons laid out in the Bill. Comfort and warmth are literally some of our most basic necessities as human beings - they are literally cited at the foundation of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. To ban girls and young women from wearing trousers to school is not only discriminatory, but in contravention with basic human needs.

I wholeheartedly support this Bill. I actually protested at school in 2001 for the right to wear trousers, so I am honestly mortified that 25 years later schoolgirls are still having to fight for something so basic.

This is about dignity, decency, equality and safeguarding. Girls should not be forced to wear clothing that makes them feel exposed or uncomfortable, particularly when there are very real concerns around unwanted photographs, upskirting, sexual harassment and other forms of abuse.

School uniforms should allow children to learn without worrying about being sexualised, scrutinised or exposed. Girls deserve the same practical choices as boys, and the ability to wear trousers should be an absolute bare minimum.

I never imagined that, a quarter of a century after standing up for this at school myself, girls would still be having to fight the same battle. Support the Bill.

I wonder how many men have ever tried to climb a tree wearing a skirt?

Play football?

Do handstands?

Run fast?

Comfortably, safely, without embarrassment learn through play in primary 1!!

I would like my daughters to be given the choice to wear trousers that I was never given as a pupil. Giving pupils the choice will not affect any other person but the individual making the choice for their own comfort. Young females deserve the same comforts afforded to their male counterparts.

If it makes just one girl feel better about going to school then it's totally worth it

I'm old enough to have gone to primary school in the 1960s where trousers were banned except during one very cold winter where we were allowed to wear them but ONLY if we wore a dress over them. I cannot believe this needs LEGISLATION in 2023. Have the Committee examined the unbelievable gender stereotyping behind the ban on girls wearing trousers? Absolutely horrified that we even need to debate such a thing in this day and age.

In 2026 it's inconceivable that girls are not given a choice. Trousers are much more convenient especially in the winter.

In 2026 there should be no restrictions on girls and young women that make it more difficult for them to participate in outdoor lessons and sport without worrying about people viewing their underwear or indeed period concerns. There is dignity in allowing pupils to access the right to wear trousers and shorts not just as an active stance seen as need amongst LGBTQ teenagers but also for girls who identify as girls but want to fly under the radar in having to make a conscious choice. At the moment it's only trans and LGBTQ girls feel able to make the choice for trousers as it's seen as exceptional. It should be seen as the norm for all girls as part of the uniform and that would help other individuals who want trousers too. At the moment the uniform policy is skewed towards girls and boys who feel different. I'm glad they included but it actually should be afforded as a basic standard, not an exception to uniform policy to all girls.

In 2026, you would assume that all pupils have the choice to wear trousers rather than skirts or shorts, especially living in Northern Ireland where the weather is mostly cold and damp.
In no other field of work is a Woman forced to wear a skirt. So schools should be no different.
In the workplace it is expected that women wear trousers why is it not acceptable in schools?
In this day and age this choice is essential, otherwise we look like a very backward society, its actually embarrassing we even have to address this.
In this day and age this is a basic human right. Girls should have a choice. The bill is way out of date.
In this day and age, given the use of trousers by any gender in practically all areas of adult life it is beyond ridiculous that school uniform laws do not permit it for adolescents.
It allows people to have a choice and avoid people winding them up over their insecurities
It is absolutely ridiculous that this survey/vote or discussion needs to be conducted in the 21st century when kids are already allowed to choose their gender but not allowed to choose their clothes!!
It honestly astounds me that anyone could disagree.
It is 2026 - this should have been included in the original legislation.
It is 2026. The right for girls and women to wear trousers has been well established for over a century. Girls wearing trousers in school does nothing to harm anyone or anything. A lot of schools allow leggings during PE. Why not suit trousers as part of everyday uniform? At the same time, if it's the misogynistic preconception of "boys being distracted" then someone needs to explain the cut of PE shorts and shorts. This is ridiculous that this survey is even a thing, and not just accepted practice.
It is a fundamental human right to allow all students the option to wear trousers and I cannot believe that there needs to be a law to implement this in 2026!
It is an undeniable right for girls to be able to wear trousers.
It is about time. Some schools have had this in place for years.
It is absolutely astonishing that in the year 2026 we are still arguing about whether girls should be forced to wear particular items of clothing in order to appease the will of middle aged men. There is no good logical reason to prevent all pupils from being able to wear trousers if it suits them.
It is absolutely insane that in 2026 this needs to be legislated for as some schools here are obviously living in the dark ages
It is absolutely ridiculous in 2026 that it is not already possible for girls to wear trousers at school. I honestly can't believe how behind the times NI is
It is absolutely ridiculous in this day and age that legislation is needed to make this possible; not to mention that it is a disgrace that the Education Minister allowed his personal views to exclude wearing trousers in original legislation.
It is absolutely wild that old men are deciding what our young girls can and cannot wear to school. Do they think all women should wear skirts or dresses to work or everytime they leave the house. There are literally no downsides to this bill passing except that men and boys cannot get more access to girls' bodies than they want to give them.
It is antiquated to force students to wear clothing they may find uncomfortable. Furthermore, it can be an issue depending on a student situation or faith.
It is baffling that this is even up for debate in 2026.
It is discrimination against girls to not allow them to wear trousers.
It is disgraceful in this day and age that we have to fight for our daughter's right to protect their dignity. This is a no brainer. How does wearing trousers, negatively impact their ability to learn? It doesn't. In fact, the more comfortable that you are, the happier you will be to learn and take part.

It is disgraceful that legislation like this is needed at all. The fact that anyone would seek to prevent girls from wearing trousers to school is both regressive and misogynistic.

Girls wear trousers for many valid reasons. For some, they provide greater comfort and confidence during menstruation, helping them manage periods without unnecessary anxiety or embarrassment. Others have sensory processing difficulties, disabilities, or medical conditions that make skirts, tights, or certain uniform items uncomfortable or distressing. Every pupil should be able to learn in an environment where their wellbeing and dignity are respected.

School uniform policies should reflect equality, inclusion, and common sense—not outdated stereotypes about what girls should wear. No child should have their education negatively affected because they are denied a practical uniform option.

I support this bill because it protects the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of girls. It should never have been necessary to legislate for something so basic, but given that some have sought to restrict this choice, these protections are both justified and important.

It is disgraceful to enforce girls wearing skirts in any context but particularly for children and teens in school.

64% of girls stop playing sports by age 14, according to the UN. Most cite fear of judgment about their bodies, bullying and health concerns including periods as reasons why.

Allowing girls to be covered up and wear trousers could alleviate many of those concerns.

It is embarrassing that this is even an issue. Not allowing females to wear trousers is sexist and regressive. Wearing trousers has no impact on someone's ability to learn.

It is entirely archaic and sexist to force young girls to wear skirts because the rules were made by a man many years ago.

Women and girls should be offered a choice in how revealing they wish to dress when forced to wear particular clothing. Why should young girls be forced to wear clothes which reveal their legs yet young men/boys do not.

It is essential that this is implemented soon. Female students should not be confined to wearing skirts.

It is imperative that girls have the same right as boys- living in Northern Ireland in 2026

It is important that kids can be comfortable and confident in what they wear, to open their focus to better take in their lessons. When I was a pupil there were students who were incredibly self conscious for various reasons and trousers would have alleviated this. There were pupils for whom wearing trousers would have reduced the attention that their bullies gave them (eg, being bullied for the hair on their legs). At younger ages I think trousers also give pupils the opportunity to run and play without risking their skirt riding up and would retain their dignity while providing freedom of activity and participation.

It is incredulous that girls do not have the right to wear trousers in school. Women and girls wear trousers in all sorts of settings and indeed it has been a workplace norm for many decades. Trousers are an acceptable form of dress for women and most organisations where uniforms are required have changed their dress codes accordingly. Trousers are quite often cheaper, more comfortable and more practical and there is no rational argument as to why girls should not be allowed to wear trousers at school.

It is inherently sexist to force a code of gendered wear onto pupils, especially those who may not identify with it. I would accept boys or other individuals wanting to wear skirts for the same reasons. In my own experience, a teacher had sexualised me as young as 10/11 years old for wearing a skirt because I sat wrong once absentmindedly. I was one of a small group who even wore it to the recommended length in high school. The crux of my argument is that skirts do not enforce modesty. Trousers do. And unless we suddenly see them being made into shorts across schools, my point stands.

It is just pure sexism to not let people wear clothing they want. It's trousers. Uniforms are outdated and inherently sexist.

It is long overdue

It is not the role of a Minister to impose its religious views on people's right to express themselves the way they want to. Let the kids develop their own personality. It's not their fault the Minister does not have one or that it is so limited that wearing trousers defines him. Do the Minister of Education has nothing to legislate about? What about teachers' wages, schools falling apart, rural schools closing, student debts?
It is ridiculous in 2026 that all pupils cannot wear trousers if they so chose to.
It is ridiculous in the year 2026 that we are even having to consider this. All pupils should be given the respect to allow them to wear trousers if they wish. For many, this is so much more than a fashion choice. Female pupils are being unfairly treated with an outdated rule that actually serves no purpose.
It is ridiculous that an act is needed. It should be agreed at schools level via the BOG as in the rest of the UK. It make the assembly look like a parish council
It is ridiculous that the minister dropped this from the legislation, All children should be able to choose to wear trousers if they so wish. One important supporting factor which hasn't been mentioned is the degree of protection from harmful sun rays which are blocked by being able to cover the skin.
It is ridiculous that this even needs to be discussed at Stormont. It is a matter of children's comfort.
It is ridiculous that this is a debate at all. Girls should have the right to wear appropriately practical clothing.
It is ridiculous that women and young girls do not have a choice of clothing in which they will be more comfortable and able to focus on their studies.
It is safer and more practical for girls to be in suitable trousers for sporting activities. It helps them to stay warmer in the winter. Especially if walking to and from school, and with the amount of outdoor learning taking place in all schools.
It is sexist to require a different standard of clothing for females. This is protected by our human rights. The right to protection from discrimination based on sex. In addition, trousers provide more freedom of movement as the worry of exposing oneself in an inappropriatea manner is removed.
I am a father to 3 girls and I strongly support this bill. I will be sending my girls to school with trousers regardless
It is shocking to think that in this day and age we are still talking about what girls wear. Uniform policies should be about pupils feeling comfortable and safe. Trousers, for alot of girls, are more comfortable and easier to move around in. They require less scrutiny i.e. how long, tight a skirt is, how appropriate are the tights/ socks they are wearing. If children and young people are comfortable they may be more able to concentrate. It is interesting and somewhat depressing that debates around school uniforms focus mainly on what girls wear.
It is simply discrimination to force or exclude wearing of article of clothing on the basis of gender. The purpose of attending school is to receive the highest quality of education possible, and as such, we should endeavour to make students as comfortable as possible. Wearing what they prefer is such a basic concept that this Bill is almost insulting in that it is even required in the first place. Secondly, this Bill would serve to help transgender and gender non-conforming pupils present themselves as they wish. This is extended to the workplace and society at large, so there is no reason to restrict pupils from having this same freedom; without even touching on discrimination and bullying that can be caused by draconian rules preventing clothing based on gender. I reiterate that school is for educating, to do so at the best level possible should mean ensuring pupils are as comfortable as possible, with no distractions from their studies, ergo - let them choose their uniform.
It is so important our girls have the same rights as everyone else in society. We do not compel women to wear skirts at work. Anyone wanting to wear a skirt can. No rights are being taken away. It beggars belief that girls have to deal with this in this day and age.
It is unacceptable in this day and age that girls have to wear skirts. The option of trousers should be there. I fought about this when I was in high school nearly 40years ago
It is unfair in this day and age to make girls wear skirts to school or rather forbid them to wear trousers to school. It is not ethically sound to differentiate girls from boys

It is utterly ridiculous that it is not already the case. It is blatant discrimination. There should be one set of uniform items that people can pick whatever they feel most comfortable wearing in to learn.
It is vital for young women and girls to have the CHOICE of wearing something more comfortable, particularly in winter months when wearing a skirt can be freezing; even with tights on. As a past pupil, it would have boosted my confidence immensely if I had the choice to wear trousers. It is long overdue.
It seems incredible to me that this is even something that needs to be passed in 2026. There are many proven needs for the change and it reflects the world of work but most importantly basic equity.
It seems ridiculous that this issue needs to be debated in the first place. Let girls wear what makes them feel the most comfortable.
It shouldn't be restrictive what clothing you can and cannot wear. There is also the fact that trousers etc are used to keep you warm. Hard requirements on dress codes are uncivilised and backdated
It shouldn't even be discussed it is just logical in today's world that girls can where the same as boys.
It's 2026, please catch up. There's no other area where women are restricted in what they wear. Give the girls the option, some will still want to wear dresses, some will prefer trousers. It might depend on the day or the weather or the time of the month. Trousers give younger girls more flexibility and freedom, they're not told to sit still so they don't expose their underwear in a skirt. Trousers give older girls more confidence and they're worried less about how they look or feel and can focus more on what they're being taught.
It's 2026, the antiquated 'rationale' between boys wearing trousers and girls wearing skirts is has no place anymore, and frankly is weird to put it nicely.
It's bizarre and perverse that this is even a question. Of course everyone should be allowed to wear trousers and anyone who thinks otherwise is likely a pervert.
It's insulting to the young girls of this country that we even have to have this debated in 2026. There are so many reasons all girls should be able to wear trousers in school. When are we protecting the right for any child to wear any uniform?
It's quite frankly unbelievable in 2026 that this question is being asked. Of course all pupils should be able to wear trousers for a host of reasons that shouldn't need to be explained!
It's ridiculous that in this day and age women at still forced to conform to misogynistic control of how they cover their bodies.
It's ridiculous that it's taken this long and it's not already a given
It's ridiculous that the 21st century we still require skirts for females.
It's somewhat shocking that we actually require legislation when girls should automatically have the choice to wear trousers at school in Northern Ireland.
It's stupid that this is even a discussion
It's too cold not to wear trousers for many children
It's 2026 and it's about time for girls to be treated equally as the boys.
It's 2026 and kids should have the option to wear trousers instead of dresses. It's been normal in every other sphere of society why not in school.
It's 2026 not 1926.
It's 2026! Time to get into the 21st century.
Its 2026, what are we doing here that this is still an issue? Males can cover their legs but females have to show theirs, can you not see the issue with this?
It's 2026, Women in the workplace wear trousers. Nurses, doctors, all professions wear trousers. Why are girls and young women not being allowed the choice to be covered.
It's 2026. Of course girls should be allowed to wear trousers as part of their uniform. They're more comfortable, more practical, and IT'S 2026.
It's a joke that this is even having to be discussed, of course girls should be allowed the option to wear trousers.
It's a pity the Education minister didn't include this in the original bill.

It's absolutely ridiculous that this bill needs to be passed. I've not been in school now for 10 years, and even when I was in secondary school, anyone could wear trousers if they wanted, and teachers rarely had an issue as long as the trousers were the appropriate style and colour.

The fact that politicians must waste time of stupid bills like this makes trust in the government wane, and proves that politicians who object to this bill have no real interest in tackling the issues that actually matter for the education system

It's astounding that there is a debate regarding this. Pupils go to school to learn. They learn when they are comfortable in their surroundings and in how they can physically be present there, in their surroundings. If they are thinking about how they look, how things look, are things visible to others - they're not concentrating on learning.
Catch a bloody grip

It's embarrassing that this even needs to be brought to a bill. Of course any pupil should be entitled to wear an item of clothing that fits standard uniform regulation.

It's frankly ridiculous that this is even still an issue in 2026. Trousers as part of a school uniform are a comfort, safety and wellness issue. Old men forcing girls to wear skirts is a serious red flag

It's important to allow children and young adults in education to express themselves however they choose

It's long overdue. This is 2026, a world in which the majority of women wear trousers, regardless of age. This includes uniforms for female police officers and nurses. In addition, bank, building society and female office staff have trousers options. As a woman in her late 60s, I spend my life in jeans, a far cry from my grandmothers's day. School uniforms need to reflect that. Apart from which, it protects female pupils (and indeed the schools themselves) from outrages such as upskirting. A pair of black/navy polyester trousers (which can be cheaply bought in the likes of George at ASDA) can look equally smart. Plus much more comfortable, especially in our wet and cold Autumn/Winter months. And it doesn't take an Einstein to know that the more comfortable you are, all the better for you to learn!

It's ridiculous it has come to this.

It's ridiculous that this is being debated in 2026. Of course everyone should have permission to wear trousers.

It's ridiculous that this still isn't standard.

I was forced to wear a skirt throughout high school, and it caused me daily problems with painful thigh chafing. In winter, my tights could be unbearably itchy and distracting. I constantly worried about exposing myself when sitting, bending down or being outside in the wind.

I also felt highly self conscious about having my legs on display. Children shouldn't have to feel uncomfortable or exposed because of their school uniform. Trousers are warmer and more practical, it's not fair that girls don't have that choice.

It's so unfair that girls have to wear skirts in the freezing cold

It's the 21st century. Let's bring the school uniform policy up to date.

Jesus wept, how fucking backwards is this place that this needs to be a law in the first place. And why does it need consultation?

Of course anyone should be able to wear trousers. Anyone who objects and wants school girls in skirts needs to be subject to a series investigation

Just sensible.

Let kids wear whatever they want. Climate change is real and it's only gonna get worse. Being forced to wear a skirt in crazy low temperatures is actual abuse but y'all ain't ready to admit that.

Let the kids wear trousers!! In [REDACTED] my girls wore trousers to school every day. They loved to do gymnastics on their break it was easier to wear trousers than expose their pants to their classmates and teachers with their cartwheels. They were warmer during winter and autumn when they played outside and walked to and from school. We were at their new school in Northern Ireland [REDACTED] when my girls felt too self conscious to wear trousers as no other girls were wearing them. They didn't want to be different and wanted to fit in so I had to go out and buy skirts. They had comments made saying trousers weren't allowed (which it didn't specify in the uniform section of the school website). I was sad that they felt self conscious and felt the pressure to conform to skirts.

It's 2026 and this shouldn't even be an issue. In secondary school with social media issues and up-skirting pictures, protect young girls by giving them the option of trousers.

Let them wear trousers or skirts whatever they are comfortable in. This is not the dark ages should not need a law passed to permit trousers
Madness that there is any consultation needed about this, never mind this one being the second or third I've responded to??
Majority of primary and post primary school uniforms are outdated and sexist Girls should have the right to wear trousers as women do in the workplace Boys and girls should have choice of branded school tracksuit, do away with shirts and ties and formal trousers Let kids feel comfortable to learn
Many schools, including my own, allow all pupils to wear trousers. This should be a non issue and a directive given by the minister to say that all pupils should be allowed to wear trousers if that is their choice. However the approach taken by the minister baffles me. Politicising girls wearing trousers to school, when so many are already permitted, makes very little sense from a political or an economic perspective.
Members of BCYC fully agree that female students should have the right to choose between trousers and a skirt for their uniform. We fully agree with the purpose of this long overdue bill.
My daughter has worn trousers since [REDACTED] around clothing. Being allowed to wear trousers in her primary school has been transformational in terms of getting her to school, her comfort, her identity and her ability to learn and succeed throughout the last few years. She had extreme anxiety around the process of moving to grammar school purely around the uniform policy, thankfully her new school have agreed to let her continue to wear trousers. I think all girls should have the right to be comfortable, feel secure and happy to allow them to enjoy school and their education. In my eyes there is no argument for them not to have this option.
My daughter is 9. When I was collecting her from school one day a boy in her class pulled up her skirt in front of me and his mother. Girls should have the right to feel safe and comfortable in school.
My daughter is in a primary school where she is allowed to wear trousers. She is often most comfortable in trousers and warmest in the winter in them. We would hope to see her right to dress comfortably and warmly legally protected regardless of what school she attends.
My daughter wanted to wear trousers to [REDACTED] but wasn't allowed. This caused a lot of upset (she has since been diagnosed as on the Autism Spectrum).
My daughter would prefer this especially when she's on her menstrual cycle. I feel that it should be a human right as when they aren't in school she can wear them.
No
No logical reason why all pupils should not be allowed to wear trousers
No, all pupils should have the choice of trousers, regardless of gender
Not letting girls wear trousers is just another way to keep sexism alive in NI. More than 1/3 of girls report being sexually harassed in their school uniform in the UK, and if you speak with older women lots will tell you that cat calling was at it's worst for them when they were 13-16. Not allowing girls to wear trousers is just adding to this.
Not sure why skirts aren't allowed for all as well if the wearer chooses
Of course all pupils should have the choice to wear trousers for any activity. It is ridiculous that it is 2026 and this is not a given already.
Of course girls should be allowed to wear trousers. If women politicians are allowed to wear trousers to work hy shouldn't girl be allowed to wear them for school. Much more practical than skirts. I think there are more important issues the so called elected politicians should be addressing.
Of course they should be allowed to wear trousers. It's their body. Another factor is the expense of school uniform has become unaffordable for many. An additional expense to parents is the under shorts that girls wear now under their skirts to prevent upskirting which beggars belief but it is reality and girls are adapting.
Overdue. Another waste of Stormont time and resources.

Parents are currently held at ransom by schools over side struck deals with certain brands.
Paul Givan's uniform bill does not go far enough, uniforms in this country are ridiculously expensive & old fashioned. If a uniform is insisted on, a PE kit format should be considered where pupils are comfortable & the uniform is sustainable. Blazers (that aren't waterproof), button up shirts & ties are unnecessary. Although the minister allowed for coats to be worn over blazers, this does not solve the problem as most schools required the over coats to be taken off in the school day & either carried (if no lockers are available) or left unattended?! This is not acceptable. Relaxing the uniform & legislating for this, so as weather appropriate clothing can be worn is the only logical answer.
People should be able to wear what they like!
Please allow girls to wear trousers for those with disabilities it can be such a blessing and indeed in the cold weather, trousers would be great for girls. Let them have the choice.
Please complete this already it's 2026 for goodness's sake
Please give ALL female school pupils in Northern Ireland the option to wear trousers to school.
Pupils should be able to choose trousers as part of their school uniform regardless of sex or gender. Trousers are practical, comfortable and often more appropriate for cold weather, travel, sport and outdoor activities.
Pupils should be allowed to have agency in what they wear to school, and especially be able to wear clothes that make them feel comfortable. I was a young girl who did not enjoy having to wear skirts every day. It's an item of clothing I felt very vulnerable wearing at that age, when I was experiencing puberty, and the uncomfortable reality of being sexualised as I got older. Pupils that are self-conscious, on their period, exploring their gender identities, or just don't want to wear skirts should be permitted to wear trousers. It's embarrassing we're still having this debate in 2026, and a reflection of how misogynistic Northern Ireland still is that trousers are not already permitted regardless of gender. We should not be telling young girls and women how to dress, and we definitely shouldn't be telling them they have to wear clothing they may find vulnerable or uncomfortable. You simply cannot say that there is gender equality if girls and boys uniforms are being treated differently.
Pupils should wear what makes them, personally, comfortable, so they can fully participate (socially, recreationally, educationally). I grew up in England and wore trousers as part of my school uniform (it was an option, as were skirts). It was co-education and trousers provided security, comfort and safety within school, and reduced harassment outside of school. The 'school uniform/school girl' aesthetic is fetishized in the media and pornography, so being granted the remit to opt out if we wanted was empowering. The emphasis here is CHOICE and EMPOWERMENT.
Ridiculous in a cold wet country for numerous months during school year for it to be compulsory to wear skirts/pinafores to and from school and for sports outside. Trousers allow girls more dignity especially during menstruation and means they won't have to worry about skirt length creeping up as they grow. This is an issue for taller girls whose skirt may be regulation length at start of school year and be inches shorter by end of school year. Numerous girls have to suffer the embarrassment of having a skirt they are forever pulling down and are forever conscious of it creeping further up their legs when they sit down in class, dining room, school or public bus. Some regulation skirts are always going to be too short for a percentage of the female school population. It's particularly galling to have a male education minister dictating teenage girls wear skirts despite being advised to the contrary.
Ridiculous that it should even be necessary to have a bill, but supporting it
Ridiculous that this has to even be passed to give young women the right to wear trousers..who are we or indeed the pompous Paul Givan to decide what they wear once it's in line with a school uniform.
Ridiculous we even need to have this consultation in 2026
School uniform needs to move with the times and needs of those wearing the same. The cost has to be achievable for everyone purchasing the same to ensure it is bought and worn, not everyone has money to spend on expensive clothing.
School Uniforms have always been noted as a preparation into students joining the real world of business, which forcing women/afab students to wear skirts completely ignores the original mentality and stills schools in a sexist mentality that forces all afab individuals in the same scenarios regardless of how comfortable they are with it
School uniforms should be more simple and cost effective. Trousers should 100% be allowed by any pupil in any school.

Schoolgirls should be allowed to wear trousers to protect them against the cold and against unwanted sexual advances especially from older men.
Trousers are a normal part of the wardrobe for women and girls outside the school setting, and have been for decades. It's time schools caught up.
School's should be doing this anyway - it seems very odd that this requires legislation. However, if it does, then it should be legislated.
Seriously, why is this even something that needs to be debated? Let girls wear trousers if they so choose!
Should've happened 40 years ago
Shouldn't be an issue in this day and age
Some schools allow girls to wear trousers. It is not acceptable that some individual schools can make the decision to prohibit trousers rather than take simple steps to incorporate them into their uniform. It is unfair and discriminatory that in some schools girls have to make a case for themselves to wear trousers, or disobey rules in order to make changes, or simply not be as comfortable as they could be during the school day. On any given day, looking around it could be argued that most women wear trousers by choice, unless for religious reasons or on formal occasions. The rule against trousers is discriminatory and outdated. It was outdated in the 80s when I was at school and campaigning for trousers, and it is disgraceful that this is still an issue and that legislation is now necessary. As long as the trousers comply with whatever colour and style is agreed, they should be an option for girls as well as boys. Not all girls will choose them and that is perfectly ok, even if only a handful choose to, that is ok. The important thing is that if they choose to, they can, and their reasons for doing so are no one else's business. Rather than explaining why we feel trousers should be legally allowed in all schools for girls, schools that ban trousers should be explaining why they have not taken this simple step to equity and equality before now.
Sorry state of affairs that legislation is required for this. This should be allowed in all schools. The bill should also introduce a price cap on the cost of school uniforms
Students should be able to wear trousers or skirts for all occasions. Boys should be allowed to wear skirts too, no restrictions, especially in cases or transgender but personal preference should prevail.
Students should have the decision to decide what to wear for themselves.
Thai shouldn't even be a question.
The benefits for girls to wear trousers for their physical and social development has a large evidence base. Refusing girls this right is not only discriminatory it has a detrimental impact on their wellbeing.
The bill should extend to all items of the schools uniform. The uniform should be a combination of the various clothing items (shirts, polos, blazers etc) and EVERY pupil should be able to wear ANY combination of a uniform.
The children should be comfortable in their clothing and wearing trousers has no impact on their academic achievements.
The choice should be available.
The Council is supportive of the purpose of this Bill. The Council is of the opinion that pupils should have the ability to choose whether or not they would prefer to wear trousers. This is particularly useful in relation to addressing seasonal changes.
The draconian concept that females must wear skirts to be seen as a woman must be changed with the era we live in. Times have changed.
The fact it's taken this long is absolutely ridiculous and is just a reminder of the constant misogyny that has existed since the founding of Northern Ireland.
The fact that girls being "allowed" to wear trousers is even being debated in 2026 is just baffling. Of course girls should be able to wear clothes that enable them to feel comfortable.
The fact that this debate even needs to happen in 2026 is ridiculous.
The fact that this is still a discussion in 2026 is genuinely hard to believe.
The fact this is being debated blows my mind. Forcing a type of clothing on a particular gender for no reason that my brain can fathom is just another way for Christian conservatives to control the bodies of others.

The idea that clothes are gendered in anyway is completely outdated. If a school has a uniform any person should be allowed to wear any version of it, regardless of gender. Although this trousers specific amendment is welcome, in truth it doesn't go far enough to truly provide equality.

The right to feel comfortable for all students in school should be universal.

To force students to wear a skirt if they are uncomfortable is perverse and can only be classed as gender based discrimination.

The Schoolwear Association supports the purpose of the Bill and the principle that all pupils should have the option to wear trousers as part of their school uniform.

We believe this move would be compatible with the wider benefits of having a clear and defined school uniform policy. Providing pupils with an appropriate choice of permitted uniform items can support their comfort, dignity and ability to participate fully in school life, while maintaining the shared identity and consistency that school uniform provides.

Feedback from Schoolwear Association members in Northern Ireland indicates that many schools already allow pupils to choose between trousers and skirts. The legislation would therefore formalise an option that is already available in many schools and ensure that it is consistently available to pupils across Northern Ireland. We support this, as it gives pupils greater choice over the uniform option that best reflects their individual circumstances, comfort and preferences, while maintaining the benefits of a clear and consistent school uniform policy.

At the same time, we believe schools should retain appropriate flexibility over the design and operation of their wider uniform policies, reflecting the needs of their pupils and school communities. Schools are best placed to make these decisions because they understand the needs and circumstances of their pupils and local communities. In this respect, the Bill establishes a basic entitlement for pupils while allowing schools to continue making wider decisions about their own uniform policies.

The weathers are getting extreme. The winters are getting colder, and the summers are getting hotter. Any pupil should be allowed to choose from wearing long trousers, shorts, or skirts. This is also more energy efficient, as everyone tolerates heat differently.

At the same time, they all have to be reasonably affordable, and the price tag should be controlled at the upper limit. The reason why the price tag should be controlled is because when there is no price control at all, there is a risk of division happening between pupils from poorer background who can only buy cheaper brands, versus those who come from more affluent backgrounds who don't have to rely on them.

The wording of the bill needs to be clear and blatant; everyone should have the option of trousers. This also needs to be inalienable and unavoidable, by which I mean that there should be absolutely zero opt-outs for individual schools - no hiding behind religion or creed.

There are so many reasons it is wrong that girls cannot choose to wear trousers to school

Why should the rule be different for both genders?

People (women and girls are people) should be treated equally.

Skirts restrict movement - for playing and physical activity

There is absolutely no reason that females should not be allowed to wear trousers as part of the school uniform. It is blatant gender discrimination.

There is no conceivable legitimate reason to prevent children of any gender from wearing their preferred item of clothing from a school uniform. This is an individual choice for the student involved and has no impact on others. The wearing of trousers does not confer gender, nor do children who wear trousers or skirts necessarily have any stake in wider ideological debates about gender and sexuality. The inability to choose can result in individual distress. The ability to choose impacts no one, unless they seek gratification in denying the personal liberty of others.

There is no good reason to force different standards on girls and boys at school, what they wear on or over their legs has no impact on the schools ability to teach or their ability to learn.

There is no good reason why girls should not be able to wear trousers to school, and there are a number of good reasons why they should. Schools are for learning, and anything that enhances the ability of pupils to learn should be welcomed. There is evidence that having to wear skirts makes girls less physically active during school breaks. Trousers are warmer than skirts during the winter. Girls wear trousers in all sorts of settings outside the school system, and in continuing to force girls into skirts for school, the education system is at best outdated and at worse misogynistic. Anyone who wishes to prevent girls from wearing trousers should be required to justify their reasoning - because there are no good reasons. Do you wish to restrict girls' activities and freedoms? Do you believe that girls' bodies are shameful and should be covered? Do you believe that girls' bodies should be visible for the gratification of onlookers? If your answers to these questions are no, you should have no objection to them wearing trousers. (And if your answer to any of these question is yes, it should be your behaviour that is questioned, not what girls may wear.)

There is no legitimate reason to deny any child, regardless of their gender, to wear trousers. It is absolutely unbelievable that this has to be debated and fought for.

This issue has been discussed by girls since I was at secondary school over 20 years ago and it's disheartening that no significant change has ever been made in our favour. There are a number of reasons that genuinely and sincerely matter to young girls, such as my own daughter now, about being forced into a skirt.

As an adult now, I still can't fathom why this issue matters to schools or to the education board. Who is campaigning to keep young and teenage girls in skirts? Why is our education system bound to their opinions? Who benefits from this? It's not girls who stand in skirts and tights in freezing weather. It's not girls who have issues with body hair. It's not benefitting girls who have been abused and don't feel safe in skirts. It's not preventing up skirting photos. It doesn't help girls who are feeling uncomfortable due to their period or who may end up with blood running down their legs. Who are these skirts for and why can't trousers also be an option in this day and age?

What job today absolutely requires a skirt? What is this forced wearing of an item of clothing supposed to prepare a girl for? It's certainly not the workforce, nor is it common in everyday society for girls or women to wear skirts every single day.

It is unrealistic and unnecessary to maintain that a skirt is the only suitable uniform for a girl in a school setting and this ridiculous hangover to a bygone day should be modernised.

There is no logical reason as to why girls should have to wear skirts. There really isn't any more to it. Women in professional careers are largely no longer required to wear skirts/dresses and/or heeled shoes. The idea that girls should be forced to wear skirts is outdated and should also be viewed as a equality issue. Schools complain about skirts being rolled up/too short. Trousers would eliminate this narrative totally. It is totally archaic that this even has to come before the assembly and frankly, embarrassing. A total non issue being made into an issue.

There is no reason in 2026 why girls should have to wear skirts which can make them feel extremely self conscious and uncomfortable.

There is no reason to mandate the wearing of skirts. You shouldn't have to, boys are not forced to have their legs or underwear half exposed as part of the uniform code, why the hell are girls required to? It's dumb, it's sexist and it's arbitrary. Get rid of it. Skirts are fine if you want to wear them, you should not be forced to wear them.

There should be no question over this - our children here should absolutely be allowed to cover and clothe their limbs for any reason and purpose - Adult citizens here choose trousers as a practical clothing choice or preference in many environments on a daily basis it makes zero sense to deny that choice or option to school children.

There's no good reason to not allow every student to wear trousers these days. They aren't asking to flout the uniform, just to have it be modernised. Why should some students be in clothes that restrict their freedom to play sports and run around and sit comfortably in the ways their peers do. Why do people feel the need to see the legs of female students while they're learning, as if that's somehow essential to them getting a good education? It's unreasonable and inappropriate honestly.

When I was in [REDACTED] given special exemption to wear trousers [REDACTED] - she should have had the freedom to choose to cover her legs for both confidence and health reasons without having to get special permissions, and all other students should have the same freedom now.

On top of all of that, allowing all students to wear trousers would reduce the risks to students of upskirting other inappropriate behaviour, and remove the problem schools have with students wearing their skirts too short. I cannot see any legitimate reason why any student should be forced to wear a skirt other than the people in charge wanting control over them or wanting to see their legs exposed, or simply 'tradition' which is not a good reason.

This bill boils down to providing choice to children in a time in their lives when they need freedom of expression where they can get it. The permission to choose to wear trousers or leg covering would have absolutely no negative consequences on a pupils education.

This bill doesn't go far enough. School uniforms are uncomfortable. Pupils should be able to focus on learning not how uncomfortable their tie is around their neck, how hot and sweaty they feel or how cold it is. Not to mention how expensive school uniforms have gotten. Schools should instead have kids wearing school tracksuits. Cheap, comfortable, non distracting, suitable for a wide range of activities.

This bill is an act of common sense and decency. I question the ethics and motives of any individual who would demand underage girls need to be seen exclusively in skirts.

This bill promotes parity, dignity and comfort. I fully support it.

This Bill removes outdated, gendered restrictions on school uniform policy. Requiring pupils to wear skirts or dresses regardless of preference or practicality has no educational justification — trousers are more practical for weather, movement, and comfort throughout the school day. Extending this to sports and outdoor activities ensures pupils aren't disadvantaged by uniform rules unrelated to safety or performance.

Giving all pupils the choice to wear trousers doesn't remove any existing options — it simply ensures no pupil is forced into a garment that doesn't suit them. I support this Bill.

This is 2026 not 1726

This is a common sense measure that will keep pupils warm and comfortable and prevent young girls from being victims of upskirting

This is a complete no brainer. It is the year 2026, we should not even be debating the issue. All three of my girls wore trousers when they wanted to, and skirts when they wanted to. It should be that way for every girl.

This is a fundamental right for all students. It DISGUSTS me that little girls are forced to wear skirts and dresses that hinder their movement and violate their privacy

This is a non issue and I am frustrated by the amount of time and resources being used to 'debate' this.

Case law- Nadia Coule (a minor) v St Josephs Grammar School 2007.

This is a ridiculous waste of time to even debate this, of course trousers for both sexes should be allowed in schools, how many women in the civil service or politics wear trousers? Why are you wasting time and money even debating this? I think there are more important issues you should be focusing on, although given your record of getting things done it really doesn't surprise me.

This is about all children having access to what other children already do.

In the workplace, women wear trousers.

Should girls have less rights than boys?

A uniform policy can simply state:

School trousers

School skirt

Pinafore or shorts for summer

This is inclusive without stipulating what is for boys or girls. This is 2026. It shouldn't even be a debate. Now could we allow my son to go to the toilet in school without having to put his blazer back on??

This is essential, it's basic right for girls and boys. How it's taken this long is crazy.

This is long overdue.

This is long overdue. It is bizarre to still demand that girls wear skirts.

This is so needed, a skirt or dress and tights/socks is just not practical for active children to get the most out of playtime. My daughter often wears shorts under her dress for this reason as she likes to do tumbles and cartwheels in the playground. The trousers will also be more practical for walking to school in the rain or snow and for biking to school. Pupils should have the choice of what they are more comfortable wearing.

This is such a basic right that all girls should have in the twenty first century. It's utterly ridiculous that this is even an issue when the minister for Education could simply take action. It makes the N Ireland government look like it's absolutely unaware of the rights of girls.

This needs to be taken care of without any further delay.

This is very important - a human right. Girls and young women require to have this choice to wear trousers when they wish to. Girls and young women deserve both comfort and warmth which tights do not always provide, especially during their periods and other times, when they may feel more emotional and physically vulnerable in a skirt. The trousers will help us have confident and comfortable pupils not worrying about being as vulnerable or cold.

This must be made law. Where schools can not use any loop holes to deny the right. No special meetings or permissions should be needed. They need to be equally accessed by girls as they are for boys. These must also be comfortable and styled for girls. Expecting them to just wear a boys current style that's available will not be acceptable. No doubt schools already are proposing girls wear boys ones to put them off wearing them. Schools should not be above the law.

This should be absolutely non negotiable in this day and age that we need to pass a bill to allow female students to wear trousers to school. I grew up wearing skirts to school, i have no children and I am only 26, and it was truly ridiculous that we didn't have the choice to wear trousers. Skirts always felt innately sexualised, no matter what length. I have enduring memories of feeling constantly cold, and always being aware of my legs. Having exposed legs, no matter how thick the tights, made me perpetually cold and uncomfortable in colder months, trousers would have provided so much more comfort, not only physically but mentally, my appearance and existence as a female would not have felt like something I was constantly, inherently aware of. Being at school as a young girl, your comfort and decency and personal sense of modesty and neutrality should be at the absolute forefront to allow full comfortability in being able to learn. Skirts were being rolled up to different lengths in schools, adding a whole other issue for girls to worry about, whether their skirt was the right length, what that means about you, are people looking at my legs, should I pull my socks down, my tights are ripped (this happened at least twice a week, my mother was spending a small fortune on tights) should I shave my legs, should I apply tan to my legs, all the questions boys do not have to worry about, and did not distract boys from learning. There should be absolutely no question that girls should have this option in schools in the year 2026. Not to mention feeling exposed and vulnerable during a formative time when menstrual cycles are beginning. The added mental security trousers would add would have been amazing when I had been at school a few years back. Comfort and personal preference for comfort should be absolute priority for every child especially female children.

This should have been sorted out long ago!

This should have happened a long time ago

This should have never had to come to this as this should have been available to all students, regardless of gender as it is a misogynist, dated rule. Girls who have suffered from menstrual conditions, unwanted attention and sensory issues have suffered for years because of this rule as it stands. Thank goodness for sense and change!!

This should not be something our girls have to spend time asking for, or our politicians spend time debating. If your answer is anything other than “of course girls can wear trousers, and should not have to ask”, then you need to take a long hard look at your reasons why!!
Parent of a girl.
This should not even need to be thought twice about.
This shouldn't need to be a law. This should be allowed full stop. I am in full support of this!
This shouldn't even be up for debate for equality and comfort.
This shouldn't even need legislation in 2026. If my employer asked me to wear a skirt it would be sexual harrasment
Today social media portrays an image of our children which does not cover how every child feels or sees themselves If by being able to wear trousers helps give them confidence to be themselves I believe this is in the best interest of all children
Trousers allow children to jump, run and play in ways skirts restrict. I want to see all children given the best possible chance of being healthy and active.
Trousers are an everyday item of clothing for all children. School uniforms should reflect this
Trousers are more practical, warmer, and allow more freedom of movement than skirts. Allowing all students who wish to wear trousers , to wear them, will allow all students to participate in all school activities freely.
Trousers are much more comfortable and convenient, and often times cheaper and easier to obtain than skirts. The key element is that children should be able to choose what they wear at school- what they are most comfortable in.
Trousers are warmer, more comfortable and enable young people to move freely. Grey & black trousers are cheaper and easier to find and purchase- rather than the school skirts many schools prescribe. Further trousers enable those having to suffer through a period every month to feel more protected and comfortable.
Trousers for the school day not just recreational and or outdoor activities
Trousers should be a choice for all pupils irrespective of sex, gender, age and cultural backgrounds.
Trousers should be an optional part of uniform for all schools. My daughters have attended primary and currently attend secondary schools which do already offer the option for girls to wear school trousers and trousers for PE. I see no reason why all schools cannot apply the same rule to provide girls with an alternative option.
Uniform should be set out, not limited to or in a particular sex. Let people wear what is most comfortable. Shorts in summer for everyone, trousers in winter for everyone etc.
Warm legs should not be determined by gender!
We shouldn't even need to discuss this, there is no valid argument against this. It's disappointing that more schools haven't taken the initiative to make this change without the need for politicians to get involved.
Wearing a skirt changes the way girls play, conduct themselves, are aware of themselves. This creates inequality that is not seen in any other work environment. It needs to change.
Wearing trousers is part and parcel of everyday modern life, and everyone should be allowed to wear them. Young people having their period is much easier to manage when wearing trousers in school, and also the warmth benefits of trousers over skirts makes this, in my opinion, a very obvious positive for young people to have a choice in this regard.
Wearing trousers should be an individuals personal choice especially when a girl is experiencing a very heavy period Wearing trousers can be an added layer of security for a self conscious teenager
What form of uniform a child wears to school should be immaterial. I support allowing children to wear trousers if they are more comfortable for them. There are multiple reasons this may be the case. As a father of two daughters trying to answer the question of why my daughters wear a skirt to school in the depths of winter whilst the boys get to wear trousers which are warmer is nonsensical. A child who is more comfortable in what they are wearing will be happier in school which can only benefit their education. This does not take away the schools right to enforce a uniform policy. It simply makes the application of those rules unisex.
What kind of person would insist that girls must wear a skirt?

When I was in school I hated wearing a skirt as part of a uniform and as part of the PE kit. The PE kit in particular had a short skirt and the boys would linger around and jeer at the girls anytime we did PE. Wearing a skirt made me feel uncomfortable around the male students. It was also cold during the winter months. Let girls wear trousers if they wish to. Stop forcing discomfort on us because we are female.
When I was school-aged, I wore trousers regardless of the rules because I felt so strongly that skirts weren't for me. Freedom of choice in uniforms is important to me because the option to wear what is most comfortable is ideal. Some students may dislike wearing skirts for a multitude of reasons, and these reasons must be respected.
When you think about it, it's quite unbelievable that this is being debated at all, never mind in 2026. Look around you, most women are wearing trousers. Why it isn't the same for children is ridiculous. I have a daughter. She rarely, if ever, wears a skirt. When she does she has to wear shorts underneath because she is an active child. If she wanted to wear trousers to school I would let her and not take any form of consequence from teaching staff. As I said: unbelievable.
Whether studying in class, or participating in PE or sports, all pupils should feel comfortable. Allowing choice of clothing can assist this.
Why are we discriminating against girls. Holding the back by making them wear skirts. Creating division between genders and abilities as girls can be limited because of the attire they are made to wear. I hated wearing a skirt especially when on my period, it is grotesque to make this requirement of young ladies.
Why are we not allowing girls the choice to wear trousers in 2026?
Why has it taken so long to get round to this? I wish I would have been allowed to wear trousers when I was at school
Why has this taken so long to catch up with the rest of society
Why not? It's simple. Skirts can be uncomfortable.
Why not? We don't want to make boys wear skirts. Why can girls not have a choice?
Why this even needs a bill is ridiculous!! Freedom for girls to wear trousers should be their personal choice, not a decision made by school board of governors or head teachers.
Why would anyone except sexual predators have an objection to girls wearing trousers?
Why would you need a Bill to allow girls to have the choice to wear trousers? It is so disrespectful and discriminatory to make girls petition the school to wear trousers if their school uniform policy does not already allow it.
With 30% of girls in the school system being sexually assaulted and the insufficient buildings (our students wait outside caravans to enter classes) trousers make sense. Especially when the staff have no uniform requirements and the ladies wear trousers per their discretion.
Without this change we are living in the dark ages and excluding mainly the female population the right to choose. It is also discriminatory. To not allow all Pupils to wear trousers
Yes- allow all pupils to wear what they feel most comfortable in
Yes girls should have a choice. On cold winter days should be an option. Most children especially teen girls wear trousers in leisure time and think option of skirts is old fashioned
Yes I think every girl has the right to wear trousers and a skirt as her basic human right. Also pupils should be also allowed to wear a summer uniform which is lighter in the summer months without a blazer to help them deal with hotter weather conditions like wear a PE kit to school with a sports t-shirt and shorts and trainers to help them feel comfortable whilst at school. This already happens in England in schools there so why not here?

Yes I think everyone should be able to wear trousers, as a primary school student everyone was permitted to wear trousers why not in secondary school and all schools. In my opinion trousers are comfortable and if the boys wear why not the girls. Now I understand that the school has a uniform to make pupils look smart and to represent the school. However, I don't see why girls wearing trousers would make any difference. Trousers can look just as smart and professional as skirts, given the boys wear it while also giving girls another comfortable and practical option. Outside of school girls wear trousers and pants and other options so why limit them in only skirts in high school. I think wearing trousers can be comfortable for them and in special circumstances like when they are on their period it may offer them protection, they may not worry about leakage and be comfortable. I think giving them the choice to wear a skirt gives them autonomy, may be happier to go to school wearing the clothes they like.
Yes I think it is diabolical that in the year 2026 we are having to have this conversation. It is pure sexism to force a girl to wear a skirt. It is absolutely shameful to have to debate this. Why should a girl not wear a skirt? It gives a young girl a choice, it also gives her dignity if she does not wish for her body to be on show. Wearing a skirt also offers a level of protection against assault or upskirting.
Yes it shouldn't even have to be addressed in this way. In this day and age it school automatically be given as a choice
Yes, girls should be able to choose trousers with their school uniform. In winter it would be warmer and more comfortable. For girls who are older during their period it would give them more security and perhaps mean less anxiety around period issues for those days too. There would be more freedom to sit and move in trousers as skirts can cause unintended restrictions in movement. Girls would be less likely to be targeted to "up skirting" or such issues as trousers allow more privacy. Girls wouldn't have to worry about issues such as shaving their legs in order to wear a skirt. For classes that require physical movement, such as practical workshop type classes, trousers could allow them to participate with more ease and comfort. It is definitely the right move to give girls the choice between trousers or a skirt for their uniform.
Yes, I agree - In this day and age, it is ridiculous that girls are being forced to wear skirts. Girls should be free to dress how they wish. Due to the impracticality of skirts, both my daughters have had to wear shorts under their skirts. The option of trousers would negate this, allowing them greater comfort and less worry.
Yes, it is frankly ridiculous that girls are not automatically given the right to wear what they are most comfortable in. Boys should be treated in the same way.
Yes, my daughter is 14 years old and has not worn and dress or skirt since she was 6 years old. I appreciate how her current school has never questioned her choice to wear trousers since she is in the minority. It is so important that girls are comfortable in what they wear. There is not one workplace which can now insist in women woman wearing skirts / dress if they do not wish to. Our schools should be no different.
Yes. Girls should be allowed to wear trousers just like boys. No man should be making this decision as it does not impact them nor have they a lived experience of being forced to wear a skirt to school. It is a very outdated law that needs fixed.
Yes. Little girls wearing trousers isn't that deep.
Yes. Smart trousers AND full length skirts as well as the standard knee length skirt should be optional for girls. Many teenage girls feel the pressure to apply tanning products to schools on account of showing their legs and it puts an unnecessary focus on appearance when they should be concentrating on learning. Not only that but many girls in secondary school are now rolling their skirts up to mini skirt level and teachers are at a loss to do anything about it. Additionally, the cold and windy weather disproportionately affects girls. It's an unnecessary burden that can easily be avoided by providing options. Furthermore, the short skirt required for PE should also be optional
Young girls deserve the same opportunities to cover there legs as the boys. It is long overdue to protect that choice in law. Please get it done. The girls are counting on you!
Young women and girls should not be forced to comply to wearing dress/skirts to school. Many reasons should tell you why, the most important should be their right to decide for themselves...
No – 12 comments

Being female, I wore school skirts and now I have a young daughter who attends primary school and wears a school skirt. I think it looks smart and should be kept as is.
Girls should have the option of a long skirt for winter.
I believe schools that do not permit girls to wear trousers as part of their uniform should be allowed to continue doing so
I feel that pupils should be distinguished by sex by wearing their uniform.
I school should be able to decide which parts of a uniform are to be worn for a boy or girl.
Is this really what MLAs at Stormont do with their time? With all the issues in this country? Produce a bill legislating about the wearing of trousers in school?!
Honestly, just leave it to the individual schools to decide the uniform policy. I don't see why this needs Stormont's legislative involvement, nor is it a proper use of time or resources to produce and debate national legislation on this issue.
Schools already have the legal and moral responsibility to ensure pupil uniforms are adequate, comfortable and a means of identifying the ethos and character of the school.
This is another example of the eroding of Christian and Scriptural values in our country. That is namely the distinction in dress between male and female.
Trousers should be the norm, skirts and shorts should be for the summer. If I wear warmer clothes in winter and lighter clothes in the summer, why don't they do the same in school? Do uniforms need to be so expensive?
We would request an exemption from this proposed change in the law being applied to our Schools: 1. The distinction in dress and appearance between boys and girls has been a point of our School ethos since the formation of our Christian Schools. This is reflective of the denominational position that dress is modest and appropriate. Distinction in dress between males and females is carried over into our contracts of employment as an 'Occupational Requirement' for teaching staff. To permit pupils to do something which is contrary to our ethos and employment requirements will only create confusion within our schools and go contrary to our Biblical ethos and sincerely held beliefs. 2. Our school parents, have historically and do presently support the school ethos on the matter of dress and appearance. In over 40 years of existence no one has ever raised this as an issue of concern. This is one of the reasons why Christian parents desire to send their pupils to our schools. They desire for these distinctions to be maintained. 3. It is acknowledged in Article 2, Protocol 1, of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms that ...In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.
While acknowledging the right of choice girls in uniform trousers look untidy and I find it a lazy form of dress. Whilst the workplace has changed there are times when restrictions are rightly implemented and imposed. There should be a dress code in every school and it should not include trousers. Joggers or leggings for PE are perfectly acceptable given their purpose .
Within our recent history and culture, skirts have widely been accepted as female clothing, and trousers as male clothing. Most schools have accepted this historically and some schools would like to continue to accept this historical and cultural position. I therefore believe that schools and their Board of Governors should be given freedom to discern what the uniform policy is for their individual school without the government enforcing all schools to permit male and female pupils to wear trousers and leggings/leg coverings.
Unsure – 3 comments
Girls should always have the right to decide to wear trousers, it doesn't need to be debated. We should not need a bill in the Assembly to allow this,
I agree that all girls should have the option of trousers rather than skirts. It should be presented as an option on the uniform list. Likewise, there should be an option of shorts/ skirt and option of tracksuit for colder days. However girls should not be made to feel they have to take these options, or not take them. All should be presented together on the list. Also, what is deemed an appropriate leg covering? This is very open to interpretation

I personally think that trousers are good for PE activities, but for a female pupil (as one myself) I think they would generally prefer wearing a skirt rather than trousers, so id give the option for females whether they'd want to wear either trousers or skirts.

8: Do you foresee any unintended consequences of the Bill?

Yes – 89 comments
A positive consequence will be that school girls in post primary education will be able to run and participate in all physical activities at lunchtime without being restricted by a skirt. A further positive consequence will be that school girls will not be forced to wear nylon tights at the age of 11 (my daughter wore socks for about the first month in year 8 and then felt forced to wear tights).
Adversely affecting exemptions religious organisations have. Historically, exemptions have been given recognising the Biblical ethos and sincerely held views of those within religious organisations. I enclose a few examples. (i) The Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as specifically amended by Sex Discrimination (Amendment of Legislation) Regulations 2008, (see section 35ZA Excluded matters). (ii) The Sex Discrimination Gender Reassignment Regulations Northern Ireland 1999, (see section 5). (iii) The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 and The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, (see regulation 16).
Attendance at any school should be seen as a privilege and the authority of the governing body and senior staff acknowledged in decisions made regarding pupil uniform and deportment. This new legislation is likely to give rise to unnecessary and mischievous challenge to and undermining of school discipline and regulations.
Boys may ask to wear skirts, which really should not be part of this subject as that is about gender identity and not about equality. Women in today's society wear trousers so school filled should also be afforded that right.
Boys may start to campaign to wear skirts
Boys might say that it is unfair they have to wear trousers in summer, and don't have the option of wearing shorts or skirts.
Boys should also have the right to wear skirts if they want. That should be built into the language.
Concern on future developments
Deterioration of school appearance. In the workplace people are rightly or wrongly judged on appearance. If my daughter had a choice of schools for her daughters I believe she would choose the one that did not have trousers as part of the day to day uniform. The primary school two attend has introduced children being allowed wear PE clothes on PE days. They all look scruffy (and this is a school In an affluent area) Trousers would have the same effect. The minister should not be dumbing down school uniforms but putting his energy into querying the cost and over provision of branded items.
Do-Gooders who are Christian for a living, nothing Christian about them - and grey men in suits who want to impose their warped morality on others. Seems very akin to the state of women's rights in countries like Afghanistan.
For sport, if representing the school in a competition, girls may be required to wear the uniform required by that sports governing body. This may sometimes be shorts or a skirt. There may also be extra cost to parents. Again in sports, many schools allow generic shorts (white, black etc,) but use branded track suits as this is considered more uniform. This will be extra cost. It is also more difficult to get girls school trousers as girls get older. They are carried by only a few specialist shops and can be more expensive than skirts. Not every young women is comfortable wearing trousers during her period. At this age, young girls can be very self conscious and aware of what others can see and think. Tight trousers can be more revealing than a skirt.
Girls are warmer. Girls are more confident.
Girls being forced to wear boys trousers that are currently available for boys and not catering for fit/style for girls. This must be addressed also. This will be a loop hole used to deter girls from wearing trousers.
Girls can feel safer more equal and confident!

Girls might finally be able to walk down the street without being sexually harassed by creeps.
Girls should be dressed as girls and boys should be dressed as boys, the next step would be boys allowed to wear skirts and that's inappropriate also.
Girls will no longer have to get letters from CAMHS just so they can feel comfortable in school
God created male and female and any blurring of that would prove harder to distinguish male and female in a school environment.
Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."
Grammar school uniforms
Grammar schools opposed to trousers on girls, ruining school image.
Hate doing whataboutism but what about the boys during heatwaves having to sweat in long pants? Give them options of shorts and long pants, it's only right
Highlighting the backward position of not allowing boys, or potentially gender non-conforming children to wear dresses. Do we actually think there's a risk here? A risk greater than trans children not feeling safe and being able to express their true selves in a safe setting - which they are required to attend?
I am hopeful that it will inspire an opportunity to review the concept and practicalities of school uniform in general. There can be no reasonable argument for young children to have to wear shirts and ties, and there remain archaic rules around some school uniform policies (e.g. no raincoats allowed to be worn over blazers).
I believe a female looks more respectable and professional in a skirt of a reasonable length, and that a difference of dress code should be maintained between a male and a female pupil in all schools
I believe that this may bring about the argument of boys being able to wear skirts. While I personally do not care what any child wears to school as long as they're appropriately covered, I see how this may seem like a much bigger step than girls wearing trousers. I think however since trousers have been part of professional women's wear for decades this step is much more reasonable and in line with what is already socially acceptable in workplaces and educational environments in the UK and Ireland
I believe there may be a chance of girls who choose to wear trousers facing bullying but if schools were held accountable to the 0 tolerance policies they claim to have, it would not be an issue
I could see certain schools foisting the additional cost on to parents, particularly if they have a specific colour or tailored style of trouser. I think there should be a caveat that trousers should be smart but can be entirely standard. Black, grey or blue for example, and you should be able to buy ones from any retailer. No bespoke, uniform only style trousers, just let students by clothes that fit and work for them.
I fear that the Bill will become too prescriptive and therefore become difficult to "police".
I foresee some schools being forced to allow their pupils to wear trousers when some school boards do not wish to have their female pupils wearing trousers (nor their male pupils wearing skirts).
I foresee major relief for many female students who are uncomfortable wearing skirts.
i have no doubt some parents will want their sons to wear skirts as they afe 'trans'. such nonsense neefs stamped on.
I think that girls will be confident and comfortable going about their day in school.
Also much warmer in cold weather and perhaps it will do away with the very short skirts that girls feel socially pressured to wear to fit in with peers.

I think there could be both positive and negative outcomes from the Bill.

Positively, giving pupils greater choice over uniform could improve comfort, confidence and wellbeing, while making school feel more welcoming and inclusive. It may encourage schools to reconsider other outdated uniform practices and involve pupils more meaningfully in decisions that affect them. That could foster greater respect, autonomy and trust between pupils and their schools.

There could also be a wider cultural benefit. If girls are no longer expected to tolerate uncomfortable or restrictive clothing simply because it is traditional, it sends an important message that their comfort, dignity and ability to participate fully in education matter. Normalising practical choices for girls could also help challenge the idea that girls' bodies and clothing should be subject to greater scrutiny than boys'.

There are some potential negative consequences. Schools may interpret the legislation differently, creating inconsistencies or confusion for pupils and parents. Some could also respond by introducing restrictions elsewhere in their uniform policies to retain control over appearance. Clear guidance would therefore be important.

There may also be short-term financial implications for families if uniform requirements change, particularly for those who have recently bought uniforms. Schools should provide reasonable transition arrangements and avoid unnecessary costs.

Overall, I believe the potential benefits considerably outweigh the risks. The Bill could address an unfair and outdated aspect of school uniform policy while encouraging schools to think more broadly about dignity, equality, pupil voice and creating an environment where children can focus on their education rather than worrying about how their clothing is perceived.

If the bill is passed schools will update their uniform policy that trousers can only be purchased from approved providers, therefore ensuring parents will continue to pay high costs for non branded uniform.

If this Bill is passed then it will lead the way for boys to wear skirts.

If you force everyone to wear long trousers (instead of being allowed to choose from long trousers, shorts, or skirts), it will make girls who already prefer skirts over trousers unhappy.

Also, boys could also argue that if girls are allowed to choose, then why the boys who can't tolerate heat during heatwaves are being discriminated, which is a valid point.

As before, long trousers, shorts, and skirts all have to be reasonably affordable, and the price tag should be controlled at the upper limit. The reason why the price tag should be controlled is because when there is no price control at all, there is a risk of division happening between pupils from poorer background who can only buy cheaper brands, versus those who come from more affluent backgrounds who don't have to rely on them.

In my opinion the bill is going to out people of questionable repute when they oppose the bill

It takes away the ability for pupils to express their identity through the uniform they are wearing more than it already is . Uniforms already restrict pupils ability to express themselves through fashion , however it restrict them more when they are unable to have a choice on if they want to wear trousers or skirts on some days

It will improve equality by reducing risk of sexual harassment of girls. It empowers girls and sends a clear message to society that archaic messages about girls' bodies and the normalisation of the male gaze via a 'hidden curriculum' are not acceptable. It will make girls more likely to continue engaging in physical activity into their teenage years. Over time this will improve physical and mental health outcomes for girls and women. It will reduce unnecessary time and workload for school staff in enforcing outdated uniform rules.

It will undermine discipline and the ethos of a school if pupils decide what they wear from day to day

It will undermine the ethos of the school if pupils decide themselves what they wear from day to day

It'll probably upset some conservative folk

It's designed to appease Muslims and the Left

Its probably poorly written and schools can just ignore it. The unintended consequence might be that everytime this issue is raised from now on, this bill will be pointed to and seen as job done. If the focus was less on "trousers for girls" and more on equality for boys AND girls and treating pupils with a little more respect it might be more popular. If today you tried to police what an adult wears or how they have their hair, you'd get in trouble and young people today rightly see the injustice in that.
Like all other amendments it will be abused to the detriment of childrens identities.
Making sure that uniforms are able to fit all body shapes. Where uniforms are currently available, they may not be suited nor created with all body shapes in mind which can make them unsuitable, uncomfortable and lack dignity for the clothing wearer. What will be done to make sure everyone is accommodated (such as materials, sizes, cuts of trousers)?
May cause financial issues for families where it is difficult to afford a school uniform. Pupils may be cajoled into wearing skirts even if this is not their preference.
More equality, more fairness. Anyone arguing against those concepts in this day and age should be nowhere near the education system (or in government).
Once the Assembly starts legislating for individual elements of school uniform, it establishes a precedent for increasingly detailed national control over matters that have traditionally been determined by schools. If trousers must be available by law, what happens next? Skirts, shorts, footwear, colours, PE clothing, hairstyles, coats, religious/cultural adaptations etc.?
Only positive things can come from girls being allowed to wear trousers. It's shocking this has taken so long
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
People complaining on Nolan for no good reason whatsoever.
People will start to say that boys should be allowed to wear skirts, as a way of making a mockery of the bill. Boys should be allowed to wear whatever they see fit to, as should girls.
Perhaps questions as to which style of trousers girls should wear. Traditional trousers boys wear wouldn't be suitable but then again skin tight fitted trousers will not be appropriate either.
Perverved old men won't be able to look at young girls legs. There will be no up skirting. What a shame
Politicians might actually focus on important issues.
Positive ones. Girls feeling more at ease in school, less harassment, easier to manage periods, trans kids can wear them without having to come out, less restricted movement
Possible that boys will request to wear skirts or pinafores
Potential bullying avenue regarding choices particularly during introduction and for those from disadvantaged families. schools should have appropriate policies and procedures to manage bullying, and affordable school uniforms should help reduce negative impact on disadvantaged families. Trousers are also possible cheaper.
Potentially will need to change rules for sporting fixtures which currently usually require shorts. However day to day for PE and normal classes allowing trousers should have no negative effect or require any change.
Pupils used to wearing skirts may face judgement if they are one of only a few who choose to wear trousers. However, that can be dealt with with pastoral intervention.
Pupils will go about their day in relative comfort, and only need to worry about being felt up instead of up skirting etc..
Removing choice from young people, ie banning skirts altogether. Young people should have the choice of wearing skirts if they so choose.
Schools dictating a specific style/type of trousers that don't suit all body shapes, types, sensory or religious issues
Schools still requiring female pupils to wear a pinafore/skirt for school occasions meaning both trouser and skirt options needing to be purchased

Schools will charge ridiculous amounts of money for specific pairs of female tailored trousers. Black, grey or navy trousers of one specific style is perfect, just like the males trousers. But don't let them charge £50 per pair for the privilege. Defeats the purpose and just drains the parents already stretched budget. Bootcut or slight flared trousers suit pretty much every girl's shape. And if they can't agree on a formal shape then put every child in a tracksuit and leave it at that. But the cost needs to be regulated!!!
Some boys may wish to wear a skirt/pinafore!
Some boys will in turn want to wear skirts to school, such is their right. There is also likely to be commentary around "appropriate" length of shorts and the "appropriate" tightness of the trousers or shorts. I say this from my experience as a woman who has received commentary on all variations on my choices of clothing.
Some male pupils may request to wear skirts.
Some people who are unconnected with the wearing of trousers in schools by girls (I.e. anyone who is not a girl attending school) will not be happy. But since they are not school girls it is not their business to be unhappy. The only people whose opinion is important here is school aged girls.
Some schools may try to wiggle out of this - grammar schools in particular. You need to make sure it applies to all schools.
Some schools will insist on what pupils wear and not allow it to be a choice. I think we should scrap uniforms altogether and let pupils wear whatever they like (as long as it's safe and practical). It works in other countries, why not here? School uniforms are an extra expense that parents/caregivers could be doing without. What is important is their education not what they are wearing.
The demarcation between males and females will be further broken down
The faith based ethos of schools that traditionally have not permitted girls to wear trousers due to Bible based beliefs will be discriminated against
The gendered framing of this bill raises the prospect of discrimination against transgender or gender nonconforming pupils who wish to wear a skirt as part of their school uniform as is their right in expressing their gender identity.
The only untended consequence is that people of faith who do not want their gilt children to wear trousers continue to insist that they don't leaving the gilt children in a place where 'the stand out as different even more'. So I think the policy absolutely go ahead; it should be emphasised that it's a pupil's right - and not a parents right - and it should be axondapined by EDI proactive which see and respect diversity. I say this as having corps experiences and being the only girl wearing a skirt on field trips as it was my parents preference for me.
The unintended consequences mostly arise not from allowing trousers, but from how the right is implemented. If the Bill is clear, enforceable, and removes the burden from individual girls, these risks shrink dramatically. Even now with statutory guidance, schools still interpret policy differently. Evidence from the NI Human Rights Commission warns that leaving girls to "petition" individually creates inconsistency and places the burden on children rather than the system.
There will always be the possibility that counter arguments will be made for males to be permitted to wear skirts based of the aforementioned arguments.
There will be pushback and non compliance which must be dealt with swiftly and decisively.
Those with backward views on gender stereotypes will find some way to make the lives of women a political statement.
Tight sales going down
Trousers are more expensive as yp grow in an academic year and will need to be replaced
Trousers are often cheaper than fir example pleated skirts thus making uniform more affordable
Uniform costs
Will there be further guidance issued on uniform policy in increasingly hot weather?
Yes strong determined girls with the power of choice in what they wear to school!

Yes, girls could be happier and more successful in completing their education and be more successful long term in life.



Yes. My main concern is that schools could comply with the letter of the Bill while undermining its purpose in practice.

For example, if trousers become a legal option but a school continues to communicate that skirts are the “normal” or preferred uniform for girls, pupils who choose trousers could still experience stigma, comments or pressure from staff or other pupils. The legislation should therefore make clear that choosing trousers must not result in a pupil being treated differently or being made to feel that they are somehow deviating from the expected uniform.

There is also a risk that schools could introduce unnecessary restrictions around the style, colour or availability of trousers, making them technically permitted but practically difficult to obtain or wear. Uniform policies should be genuinely gender-neutral and affordable.

I would also hope the legislation avoids simply creating another set of gendered expectations. The aim should be choice for all pupils, rather than creating a situation where trousers become associated with one gender or skirts with another.

Ultimately, I struggle to identify a significant negative consequence of allowing pupils to wear trousers when there are already clear practical, comfort and dignity reasons for doing so. The greater unintended consequence would be continuing to reinforce outdated gender stereotypes and making children conform to clothing expectations based solely on their sex.

The implementation should therefore ensure that the right to choose trousers is genuine, affordable and free from stigma or discrimination.

You may in some cases have male pupils requesting / opting to wear skirts, possibly to make a point, or stand out. I can't see any harm in it and I don't think it would be many.

School uniforms may evolve into something more practical and comfortable overall

No – 32 comments

Absolutely not

Absolutely not - girls can feel more comfortable in trousers if that is their preference.
They will be warmer in winter if they are permitted to wear trousers too!!

Anyone who disagrees with allowing the option for girls to wear trousers is to be regarded with the utmost suspicion.

But you're probably going to get complaints from religious groups and old people. Once again it shows how religion should be taken out of schools, they shouldn't have any part of a child's formal education and shouldn't be controlling boards of governors

CiNI does not foresee significant unintended consequences arising from the Bill. This is already an established and uncontroversial uniform option in many schools and education systems around the world. There are, however, some implementation issues which should be considered.

First, the right should operate as a genuine choice. In seeking to remove compulsory skirts, care should be taken not to mandate compulsory trousers for all pupils. A children's rights approach should maximise reasonable choice rather than replace one restriction with another.

Second, implementation should avoid inadvertently creating a distinction between 'boys' trousers' and trousers provided as an alternative for girls. Schools should be encouraged to frame permitted uniform items inclusively and ensure that pupils exercising the right are not singled out, stigmatised or required to seek individual permission.

Third, affordability should be considered. The exercise of a statutory right should not depend upon families purchasing an unnecessarily specialised or school-branded trouser. Existing principles concerning affordability and availability should therefore apply equally to trousers provided under the Bill. Where the legislation results in reduced demand for school-specific skirts, suppliers should be notified at the earliest opportunity of likely market effects.

Finally, CiNI recognises that questions may arise concerning the ethos of individual schools. Any competing rights considerations should be addressed consistently with applicable human rights and equality obligations, with the rights and best interests of the child given appropriate weight.

These are matters of effective implementation rather than reasons to dilute the central principle of the Bill. Indeed, clear statutory guidance can help to prevent such unintended consequences while ensuring that the entitlement is meaningful, accessible and consistent for every child.

Girls should be able to wear trousers.

Girls will finally be comfortable and safer!

I can not see any down sides to allowing girls the freedom to choose wearing trousers to school

I do not see any downsides to school pupils being allowed to wear clothes they're comfortable in.

I don't see any unintended consequence. The intended consequences to allow people a choice.

I wore trousers in primary school and many other girls and there was no problem, so I see no problems to occur in secondary school.

If anyone has a problem with a young girl wearing trousers then questions need to be asked about them

If boys want to wear skirts let them. I don't care so long as they're comfortable and practical. Although I doubt many boys will take up that offer because in the dead of winter no one wants to be wearing a skirt and tights.

Its absurd that it's even up for debate that someone has the right to cover their legs when they come to a place of learning.

No. I feel girls should be given the choice to wear trousers

No. The option is there for anyone to wear trousers. It won't force anyone to wear them or to not wear them

Oh what a leading question! Just looking for reasons not to do this. I No doubt there will be those answering that "boys will want to wear skirts now." Perhaps, but this bill needs to give girls their rights that is the priority here, or rather just giving them the same rights to choose to be covered that boys already have.

Only if you consider a positive move towards equality as an unintended consequence...

Other than girl will be more comfortable and less cold in winter...

Schools need to allow trousers? Girls should not have to ask permission.

The only people who are against this, and want to enforce girls in skirts, are those with ill intent. People who want to look at young girls legs, have easier access for upskirting or people who just want to control girls and women and what they wear.

There will not be unintended consequences to the bill. Allowing girls to be able to wear trousers if they desire is a right that women have fought for for centuries now and we are behind as a country and people.

theres no harm with trousers

This is about choice - there can only be positives from this. Girls who prefer to wear skirts still can, girls who prefer to wear trousers now can. Isn't that wonderful? The only issue that may arise is the anti-women DUP dinosaurs being raging, which again would be fabulous.
This will be a personal choice, there will be no consequences if pupils have choice. If people for religious / social reasons prefer to wear a skirt that's fine too.
Uniforms should be affordable and simple across all schools.
Unless you mean "upset the tight a**es", which frankly is irrelevant
We do not currently foresee any material unintended consequences arising from the Bill. Feedback from our members in Northern Ireland suggests that offering pupils the choice of trousers or skirts is already common practice across many schools. The Bill would therefore largely formalise an existing approach rather than require a fundamental change to the way in which school uniform policies operate. We would expect that it will be possible to incorporate this change within schools' existing uniform arrangements while retaining their ability to determine the wider content and design of their uniform policies.
What consequences could possibly be a result of allowing females to cover their legs in the same way as their male counterparts. This is basic equality rights,
What consequences? That girls are confident and comfortable in their clothes?
What sort of intended consequences could there be with females wearing trousers? Surely it mitigates against upskirting?
What? This is probably the most stupid question I've ever read! What could possibly go wrong for goodness sake???? They can wear a skirt if they want or wear trousers if they want..... This question was obviously shot out by a man. Do you think that trousers are going to turn Girls lesbian? Trans? Make them feminists that will reject men? Refuse to have children? For goodness sake grow up. There is no downside or "unintended consequences" of a girl having her legs covered.
Unsure – 12 comments
Any issues need to be dealt with as and when they arise, the main consequences can only be predicted.
Boys advocating to wear skirts?
Hopefully schools cannot opt out Trousers are designed to be comfortable and aesthetic for girls.
It is reasonable to expect a small cohort of pupils to challenge any change in uniform policy. Some boys, particularly those navigating identity and self-expression, may argue that if girls are permitted to wear trousers, they should be permitted to wear skirts. This behaviour is typical of adolescents testing boundaries rather than a reflection of widespread concern.
None of any important consequence - The bill clearly mainly applies/affects females within a school environment - males have traditionally had trousers as an option. I fail to see what unintended consequences could possibly have any meaningful or negative impact on our society
Of course. It could lead to backlash, confusion and probably assumptions that a person is trans when they are not trans for the initial adjustment period. Wearing a skirt is ultimately still a very reinforced social marker of femininity, and there will be plenty of girls who refuse it as to not offend their parents or friends. Skirt cliques could also start. But I believe wholeheartedly it would be more good than not, and an undoubtable step in the right direction for personal freedom :)
Only from people who have no idea what it's like to be a teenage girl.
Perhaps the hard drives of those who have an issue with girls wearing trousers should be inspected
Possibly some male pupils might decide to wear skirts in extremely hot weather or 'to make a point'; however, this should not restrict girls/non-binary/transgender pupils from having the option to wear a skirt or trousers as part of their uniform.

Some may argue that this should be a two-way street where young-men should be allowed therefor to wear skirts or dresses. I see no concern with this so long as they feel safe and comfortable and can focus on their studies. This is a ridiculous argument.

The bill could conflict with gendered uniforms in certain schools. However, it could be argued that the practice of gendered uniforms is archaic and also unfair for students.

Who knows until it goes through?

Like what? Males wanting to wear skirts. Is that what those who are against the Bill afraid of? So what if they do. If there is an option of skirts and trousers all pupils should be free to choose either.

9: Do you think Clause 1 will have the effects that are anticipated?

I believe Clause 1 will have all the anticipated effects. – 18 comments

Again absolute no brainer

And more!! Our girls are being left behind in many things and there are many girls who are ND but undiagnosed and they are struggling when it comes to so many things at school and uniforms is one of these things. This will make a difference to those girls.

Can we focus on getting rid of the absolutely awful blazers now too please? We simply do not have the climate for them.

As per what I said earlier for question 7, I think a uniform policy can only truly support neutrality, inclusivity, and equality if all options; trousers, skirts, shorts, and any other leg coverings, are a choice open to all pupils regardless of their gender.

CiNI considers that Clause 1 is likely to contribute positively to the outcomes identified by the Committee, but effective implementation will be key to realising those benefits.

From a children's rights perspective, the most immediate effect of Clause 1 is clear: it removes an unnecessary restriction on children's choice where that restriction can affect their dignity, privacy, comfort and participation in school life. This is consistent with the UNCRC principles of non-discrimination (Article 2), best interests (Article 3) and respect for children's views (Article 12), alongside the right to education.

Children and young people have described concerns about menstruation, unwanted exposure, body confidence, physical activity and freedom of movement associated with compulsory skirts. Their experiences should be afforded significant weight. There is also a wider evidence base indicating that gendered or restrictive school clothing can affect girls' comfort, participation and physical activity.

CiNI would, however, distinguish between contributing to these outcomes and guaranteeing them. Providing a trouser option may reduce anxiety about unwanted exposure, but responsibility for preventing upskirting must remain with those responsible for such behaviour and with effective safeguarding measures. Similarly, trouser choice may support comfort and period dignity for some pupils but is not, in itself, a solution to the wider barriers girls may experience.

The equality and inclusion effect is particularly persuasive. Clause 1 establishes the straightforward principle that access to an approved item of school uniform should not depend upon a pupil's sex. Importantly, it increases choice rather than replacing one compulsory garment with another.

Implementation will determine whether this statutory right becomes a meaningful right in practice. Departmental guidance should be clear and unambiguous, including that pupils should not have to request special permission or justify their decision to wear trousers. The Department should communicate the change effectively and engage with schools, governors, pupils and parents to support consistent implementation. Consideration should also be given to affordability and availability so that practical barriers do not restrict the exercise of the right.

CiNI would also encourage ongoing monitoring following implementation, including engagement directly with children and young people. This should identify whether the entitlement is being applied consistently, whether pupils experience barriers or stigma when exercising it, and whether the anticipated benefits are being realised.

CiNI therefore considers the anticipated effects reasonable and credible. However, the strongest justification is more fundamental: where there is no compelling reason to restrict a child's reasonable choice of uniform, their dignity, participation and expressed views should take precedence over convention.

Clause 1 represents a constructive enhancement to the School Uniforms Act. By establishing a statutory right for all pupils to wear trousers, it aligns uniform policy with contemporary safeguarding, equality, and inclusion standards. The clause is likely to reduce the risk of upskirting, improve girls' access to education, support dignity during menstruation, and facilitate full participation in recreational and outdoor activities. It also promotes neutrality and consistency in uniform policies across schools. Overall, Clause 1 provides a clear, rights-based framework that benefits pupils and strengthens the fairness of school uniform provision.
I believe I've already covered this in previous answers.
I felt far more comfortable wearing trousers at school especially during my time of the month. Skirts made me worry about leaking as I suffered heavy menstrual flow which in turn made me distracted and unfocused .
I know for my daughter that she will feel more comfortable in herself if she can wear shorts/trousers instead of skirts. This will help her confidence in school.
I think it will give girls confidence and have the ability to choose what they feel confident in
It is crucial that everyone should be able to wear trousers if they wish.
It is ridiculous that we are having to state the obvious here. Every child should have a choice to wear trousers. Adults should not be making this decision for them.
Skirts are annoying especially in winter when you need scratchy tights underneath. This is a distraction from learning
some girls are very uncomfortable wearing skirts or maybe leggings so maybe they could like to wear trousers but they would get in trouble wearing it so i feel like girls should wear what they are comfortable with.
There must also be more done to tackle why upskirting is a problem in the first place. It shouldn't fall to girls to have to wear trousers in order to avoid being sexually harassed.
This would be so much better for female students to be able to wear trousers and suitable leggings or similar for sports.
As a mother of a past pupil who was a victim of 'up skirting' in secondary school numerous times, as it's common practice unfortunately.
When discussing this clause members made it clear that we support every clause fully, however we want to make it known that we believe this won't be the main solution to female students experiencing things like upskirting and feeling unsafe and that more work needs to be done in this area. We also want to make it known that we believe that also to ensure period dignity in schools that sanitary products in all schools should be free and accessible. We also believe that girls should have the choice to wear either tights or socks with their uniform if they wear a skirt if they want this option, this can help girls with sensory issues who may struggle with wearing tights.
Yes, yes, yes, yes and yes.
I believe Clause 1 will have some of the anticipated effects. – 61 comments
"Help girls join in with classmates and learn without worrying about being judged or feeling disadvantaged for reasons that have nothing to do with their ability." i doubt this will occur. it is very unlikely that people are going to be judged as a girl to wear a skirt
As a staff member of a school who has introduced trousers for girls recently, I think it will help with all of the above. However I think the vast majority will continue to wear skirts.
As with all new policies, there could be unintended consequences of anything, and wouldn't be found until trialled out. There is also a risk of singling out girls who prefer skirts over trousers, and I believe having a choice to choose from is always better than not having one at all.
Cant speak for girls as a man
Don't think it will impact on neutrality or help girls feel less judged. They will still be judged
Even if all the effects are not achieved then any one of them by itself is worth doing this.
Help girls feel warm in colder months. Help to create a feeling of confidence and at one with their male peers
Help girls join in with classmates and learn without worrying about being judged or feeling disadvantaged for reasons that have nothing to do with their ability.
I am not a teenage girl so I'm not the best person to know. But why would girls wearing skirts would mean they're worried about being judged for wearing them.

I believe girls should have the choice in what to wear but I don't think it will reduce any of the clauses other than reduce the likelihood of upskirting
I believe that it will have all intended effects except the first.
While it will provide a much needed comfort for anyone subjected to or who feels they are at risk of up-skirting. This should not be used as a way to remedy the issue. Students should have the option to wear either skirt or trousers. If they feel they HAVE to wear trousers to protect against sexual assault, that is not a free choice.
The focus should be on removing the threat rather than victims/potential victims changing their behaviour to mitigate risk.
This should highlight the need for further strategy implementation to counter this type of sexual assault.
I believe that upskirting needs to be addressed separately. I would like girls (and women) to be able to choose to wear skirts or trousers depending on their preference without the onus shifting to them when it comes to preventing themselves from becoming a victim.
I can't speak to management of periods with dignity etc as I am a 40+ year old man.
I don't feel by making girls wear skirts as part of uniform it makes them feel unique and individual, not disadvantaged.
There are times when trousers could be worn, I.e, for PE during physical activity.
I don't see how trousers affect menstruation
I don't think wearing trousers will achieve these aims. Girls and boys are fundamentally different and by wearing distinct uniforms it maintains this.
I don't understand how wearing a trouser versus skirt helps you manage your period, however I agree with the rest.
I don't believe it will reduce the likelihood or impact of upskirting in that only action against upskirting will do that. Girls should never feel that they SHOULD have to choose trousers to prevent upskirting and I fear highlighting that the bill reduces the likelihood or impact of upskirting takes the onus away from educating those who do it that it is unacceptable.
I don't believe that trousers alone will provide girls with dignity during their periods. Firstly when thinking about uniform it would depend on the cut of the trousers / shorts and the type of waistband. Other factors are involved with period dignity in school such as having to ask to use the bathroom, access to hygiene products including soap which is not always available in school bathrooms.
I don't think skirts are the reasons women and girls feel disrespected, excluded, or unequal, I believe that is fully from the attitudes of a patriarchal society. Telling them they can't wear trousers is another symptom of that attitude.
Regardless of the outcomes, we shouldn't be dictating to woman and girls what they should wear.
I don't think that them wearing trousers is going to magically make them not feel judged or disadvantaged. I agree with the other points especially for sports. They should not be wearing short skirts/skorts for any sports.
I don't think trousers help manage a period with dignity, you do that by personal hygiene and appropriate products and realising that you aren't the only one in the world having a period. Body confidence also doesn't come from trousers, it comes from self love and self respect. It will also only promote equality if the trousers are well made and not just allowing females to wear male shaped trousers.
I don't understand how trousers are distant to shorts in magazines dignity around periods but perhaps this is something girls and young women are now experiencing. If so, all should have the right to choose to wear trousers, if they prefer.
I expect the change to improve comfort, dignity, freedom of movement and equality for pupils. However, some of the broader anticipated effects, such as improved access to education, are likely to depend on wider school culture and cannot be attributed to uniform policy alone.
I never felt that wearing a skirt when I had my period, affected my ability to learn. My period affected me. Would I have felt more comfortable in trousers - yes. Only worn a dress again at my wedding!
I think confidence is hard to measure and not sure if wearing trousers would have that outcome on every pupil.

I think it works for inclusion, upskirting, safety but I'm not sure I can see how it helps with girls joining in, being judged or their sporting / academic achievement.
I think that there will always be a situation where girls can feel judged for reasons other than ability. Wearing trousers won't magically fix this
I think that although having to wear a skirt to school of course does pose limiting factors to girls in school it is only one of many.
I think the Clause will have the anticipated effects if girls in schools are encouraged to exercise their right and there isn't bullying based on who wears trousers and who wears skirts.
I think the risk of upskirting is so small that if this were the only reason for the amendment, it would be using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Indeed, if the smallest minority of potential upskirters are prevented, they will find an alternative method of humiliating females. I also do not believe that wearing trousers guarantees more dignity with periods at all. It's clutching at straws. The really and only reason that trousers should be allowed is that females deserve to have a choice. Trousers are commonplace on attire for women, and it is only just that this follows through to schools. There is no need to add further reasons.
I think this clause, in ignoring the existence and rights of transgender girls will have an effect of damaging their confidence, comfort and feelings of being respected and will have an overall negative impact on inclusivity
I would be somewhat concerned that the phrase "or other leg coverings as appropriate" could be used by schools to insist on a certain type of leg covering (e.g. tights) being worn. Girls need to be able to choose trousers should they so wish.
I would say some because at this generation of time, body negativity is spread everywhere on social media- you quote "Help girls join in with classmates and learn without worrying about being judged or feeling disadvantaged for reasons that have nothing to do with their ability." Well with body negativity these days being so normalised it is most likely the fact that bullying would arise.
If boys want to wear skirts then why isn't that an option?
It does not support neutrality, inclusivity, and equality in school uniform policies because boys are excluded from the option of wearing a skirt that girls currently have.
It is likely that unforeseen effects will occur therefore these would need to be addressed at the time however the bill will certainly help to address the current situation and issues being suffered by girls in schools.
It only covers " ... when engaging in recreational, sporting or outdoor activities." Girls should be allowed to wear trousers at all times in school...including in class and everyday school life... not just "when engaging in recreational, sporting or outdoor activities."
It won't meet the last point because boys aren't allowed to wear shorts outside of physical activities. This bill allows girls to wear skirts or trousers. Boys can only wear trousers. Not equal.
Managing their periods with dignity will take more than being allowed to wear trousers. Dignity in school, being able to access the toilet when they need it, not within breaks at school. Access to period products within toilet areas and not having to ask for them.
my daughter does not feel comfortable in the prescribed trousers and therefore still won't wear them there needs to be more flexibility from the schools about the style of the individual items. our children's dress code overall is uncomfortable and not in line with modern day work attire
No implementation will be 100% effective, but we can only strive for greatness.
Not everyone will want to wear trousers and it will create disparities between students
Peer pressure to wear a skirt may make it really difficult to opt for trousers.
Shorts must be legally allowed all year round. Why all year because we can have warm Autumns as far as Halloween and warm springs from March. Schools force kids to wear blazers tights and trousers in heat above 18 degrees is not ok. Teachers don't have to kids shouldn't. Blazers should also be banned.
So long as this is read and understood not to be exclusively for PE etc. This should be a right for all young people in all aspects of their uniform
Support neutrality, inclusivity, and equality in school uniform policies.

Supporting neutrality is a stretch
The problems described certainly exist in some schools but not all.
The Schoolwear Association believes that Clause 1 is likely to contribute to several of the effects identified by the Committee by ensuring that every pupil has the option to wear trousers, or appropriate leg coverings when participating in recreational, sporting or outdoor activities. For pupils who choose to wear trousers, having that option may support comfort, dignity, confidence, mobility and participation in school life. Establishing the same entitlement for all pupils can also support inclusive and consistent school uniform policies. However, the impact of the legislation will necessarily depend on individual choice. Pupils and their parents should remain able to decide which permitted uniform option is most appropriate for their personal circumstances. However, the introduction of a right to wear trousers will not by itself address all the wider welfare issues identified by the Committee. Schools must consequently continue to maintain strong safeguarding policies which protect all pupils, irrespective of the uniform option they choose. The availability of trousers should complement these arrangements. Our members in Northern Ireland also report that many schools already provide pupils with a trousers option. The practical impact of Clause 1 may therefore be relatively limited in those schools, although putting the entitlement on a statutory footing would ensure that the choice is available consistently across all schools.
there is a clear focus on girls. boys?
There is still room for improvement on the equality front when it comes to uniforms. For example girls wear white socks, boys wear grey! Like why? I have no clue. The only answer I can think of is to make a difference. Right from the start of their educational journey. Difference. For no valid reason. And so begins the divide, the difference the inequality.... in their socks. Madness!
There needs to be major changes to eliminate the deep rooted misogyny in the education system. This is a positive step but more needs to be done in terms of teaching boys from a young age to respect girls, promoting equality. Northern Ireland is an unsafe place for girls and women currently. Major reform to the army years education is needed.
To achieve the stated aim of neutrality, inclusivity, and equality, Clause 1 should also allow for boys to wear skirts, in addition to allowing girls to wear trousers.
Transgender boys might look to wear skirts
Trousers will not create confidence. But could create the environment for confidence
Trousers will obviously prevent "up skirting" as it is so delicately put, but the answer to the problem is not to remove all modesty from a young girl. I thought girls already had access to all areas of education and I thought that we weren't to discriminate because of dress etc. Is this not the case in our state sponsored education? I detest the idea that any young girl is taught by any influence to fixate on her appearance to the point that her clothes needs an Act to make her feel better.
Uniform is not the only barrier to girls feeling confident and respected, or period dignity.
Wearing trousers may help in some ways but work on respect, positive self esteem & confidence and also empathy needs to be worked on with all pupils.
Wearing trousers will help in a practical sense. But the schools have to enable all toilet facilities available to pupils, often there are a few pupils who cause issues with blocking sinks for example in toilets, then that toilet facility is locked. Kids will always judge each other, and I don't think that will change. But I think the ability to wear trousers will give more practical options to girls and will hopefully stop the trend for rolling up skirts for fashion reasons etc.

Whilst I am pleased to see this policy being introduced and believe it will have many positive effects I don't believe the Bill full support neutrality, inclusivity, and equality in school uniform policies as it still does not take account of non-binary, transgender and/or gender diverse pupils. Ideally the whole uniform would be gender neutral with options for skirts/trousers/shorts that are not tied to pupils sex.
With teenagers my worry is girls who wish to wear trousers are misjudged by their peers. It might be good to encourage it in primary school so they are used to wearing trousers at school by secondary level. That they are not just worn during periods as this will affect a girls privacy.
I believe Clause 1 won't have the anticipated effects. – 11 comments
1. Instead of changing a uniform bill, deal with those who are upskirting. 2. A skirt is more comfortable, and I don't see how respect has anything to do with it. 3. How would they have dealt on the war front, as a nurse, who wore dresses? 4. Those girls who wish to dress as a girl i.e. wear a skirt, will be the ones who will be judged. 5. Pandering to the trans.
I am against Clause 1 because of the overall impact it will have on Independent Christian Schools
I don't believe that any of these things will happen due to a girl wearing a pair of trousers.
I don't believe girls are unable to be comfortable and confident or unable to move freely unless they wear trousers
I went to school for 14 years and never was it an issue. I was never aware of any girl in the school being "up skirted" in 14 years. The only issue noted was cold which can be sorted with a pair of tights. Again, let schools decide on uniform policy. If individual schools allow girls to wear trousers that's fine. It does not need central government legislation.
If skirts were of a reasonable length there would be less likelihood of unstinting. If phones were prohibited in schools they would also put an end to that happening. As a female, I managed all my school life in a skirt - and since with no adverse effects. God made man and woman, clearly different from each other and we should honour that. Therefore some schools for religious reasons will oppose this Bill as it is contrary to their beliefs. Are you going to force this on them?
It will make body shape more obvious and so make girls feel less confident and comfortable. It will make periods more difficult to manage as leakages will be more obvious
It will make girls less confident and comfortable as their body shape will be more obvious. It will also make managing their periods more difficult as leaks will be much more obvious
There is a focus on things most girls do not think about. Upskirting is a problem with boys. Better teach boys what is appropriate behaviour. Why should girls wear trousers to prevent this?
Wearing a pair of trousers is surely not the answer to these issues - they're bigger than just about trousers!
While I appreciate it is more modest for girls to wear trousers during certain activities, such as sports; yet the government does not need to broaden the law beyond such specific circumstances to the entirety of a school day when it is modest and acceptable for girls to wear skirts - thus visibly distinguishing their gender from boys.
Unsure – 1 comment
Upskirting is not an issue girls should have to manage. It's an issue boys and men should be held accountable for.
My concern is girls will have to wear traditional trousers, instead I believe you should be asking the girls themselves what type of trousers/uniform would be most comfortable and practical for their needs.

10: It is appropriate for the DE to also publish its guidelines on school uniforms.

Strongly agree – 75 comments
A whole school approach and a whole EA approach across the various boards.
Accountability is important
Agree strongly, guidelines can help schools in designing their uniform policy and publishing them will help parents who have queries on what is suggested.
All guidelines should always be published
All guidelines that someone is meant to follow should be published and made available to those who are affected by them
An absolute parents/guardians as well as pupil have a right to know.
As someone who has taught in a number of schools England - all of which have trousers as a standard option for girls - and who has studied as a pupil outside of the UK, in schools that allowed me to wear trousers as a girl over 20 years ago, Northern Ireland is vastly behind the rest of the UK on this issue. I am disappointed it has taken until 2026 for the disparity in uniform options for girls in NI vs the rest of the UK to be addressed. I feel intervention from the DE is necessary and without it I do not believe meaningful change will happen.
As with any government department The DE should clearly publish its policies and guidelines in accessible understandable formats for the public
Bill should include reasonable changes to the uniform code if the weather is hot. It ridiculous to see kids in full uniforms during warmer days at the instance of the school.
CiNI considers it entirely appropriate that the Department of Education should be required to publish its guidelines on school uniforms. Laying the guidelines before the Assembly provides important democratic oversight, but publication is also necessary to ensure that they are readily accessible to the children and young people, parents, schools and governors who will rely upon them. As highlighted in our response to Clause 1, effective implementation will be critical to ensuring that the new statutory right is meaningful in practice. Publication should therefore form part of a wider implementation and communication strategy. The Department should provide clear and unambiguous guidance and engage proactively with schools and governing bodies to ensure that the requirements are understood and applied consistently. Children, young people and parents should also receive accessible information about the new right. This should make clear that pupils should not face unnecessary procedural requirements, be expected to justify their choice, or experience other practical barriers to exercising their entitlement. CiNI also considers that implementation should be closely monitored following commencement. This should include engagement with children and young people to establish whether the right is being consistently respected in practice and to identify any unintended barriers, including differences in availability, affordability, school procedures or attitudes towards pupils who choose to wear trousers. Publication is therefore important, but it should not be regarded as sufficient implementation in itself. Clear guidance, effective communication and engagement with schools, accessible information for pupils and families, and ongoing monitoring will all be necessary to ensure that the statutory right established by the Bill becomes a practical and consistently experienced right for every child.
Clear communication and transparency by publishing guidance can only be of a benefit to people
Complete transparency is needed.
Costs of uniforms are still too expensive. Anything that reduces that is welcome.

DE are incompetent but guidelines will be needed so everyone is sure of what is and is not acceptable and expected.
DE must provide back up in order to avoid any doubt as to what is expected.
Everything should be open and transparent.
Expensive sports clothes are being advocated and promoted in primary schools. Just to simply wear in a PE day. This should be banned.
for far too long, grammars in particular, have taken advantage of insisting on particular brands and school insignia thus inflating costs of uniform and PE kit. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Girls should be allowed to wear leg trousers/ leggings, to think that this is an issue is outrageous.
Girls should wear skirts
Government should be open and transparent
Guidelines should be open and transparent
How else would we know what they are? How can we hold the department to account if the public dont know what they are doing? Did you seriously ask this question? Better question would be why is uniform controlled by the government at all?
I cannot think of any reason why DE would not publish the guidelines. They would be issued to all schools and schools would have to communicate them to parents, so they would be in the public arena anyway, i would have thought.
I disagree with school uniforms in general but if we're going to continue to have them, the guidelines need to be clear
I feel that schools should have the opportunity to repeal the option for all pupils to wear trousers after a one-year (September- June) trial with pupils to see whether this has improved pupil morale or attitudes toward their uniform choices. To clarify, schools can only repeal after consulting pupils and parents. If the outcome is to repeal, then the principal can consult with DE.
I feel without DE guidelines many schools may decide this policy does not apply to them and it is an opt in clause which they can opt out of.
I strongly agree with Clause 2. Requiring the Department of Education to publish its school uniform guidelines is an essential step toward transparency, accountability, and consistency across Northern Ireland's schools. When guidelines are publicly accessible, parents, pupils, and school leaders all have a clear understanding of expectations and rights, reducing confusion and preventing inconsistent or selective interpretation. Publication strengthens trust in the system, ensures that uniform policies are applied fairly, and supports the wider aims of equality and pupil wellbeing set out in the Bill.
I would like to understand what justification there could be for denying girls this choice.
I would sincerely like to see a rational argument against girls and young women wearing trousers to school in 2026. There isn't one, because no sane rationale exists for such an absurd proposal.
If it has to share thw guidelines with the assembly then the public have a right to access this also
If the DE doesn't publish this, it just allows wiggle room for those who want to keep girls in skirts so they can get a better look.
If the guidelines were not published would there be a reason for keeping them private?
In the interest of transparency I believe guidelines agreed should be published.
In the situation that this bill does not pass it is essential that full disclosure is made as to the reasons why!

It is appropriate and needed for DE to publish its guidelines on school uniforms. In our work around affordability of uniforms and wider issue of cost of the school day it has previously been difficult to clarify guidelines. In our experience this allows schools a level of ambiguity when explaining their uniform policies and decisions. We are hopeful that clear and published guidelines will encourage schools to be more transparent on their uniform policies and decision making processes.
It will be helpful for schools, parents/guardians, and pupils to be supported but the guidelines.
It would be helpful for these to be published in full, as parents can refer back to it if they are ever challenged by the school about their daughter wearing trousers.
It's better for the public it serves to see what is being proposed in public.
It's time to do away with expensive uniforms and replace them with comfortable cheap tracksuits with the school logo.
Of course DE should publish guidelines. They should also be aware of evidence that parents are struggling to afford them - I have witnessed parents unable to afford and ashamed and anxious having to get from lost property at school. England's branded item idea is sensible but probably doesn't go far enough. Young people now don't need to have outdated dress codes like 1960s business men in my opinion when evidence is lacking. I think if they are comfortable they will perform better academically and behaviour won't show much impact. School uniform days are numbered judging by attitudes of young people today. It causes decision and inequity.
Of course they should publish, these are guidelines that affect pupils and parents. They should have a right to see them too. I don't know why this isn't just the expected decision.
Publication of the guidelines is important because it lends the bill authority and cultural weight. Regardless of personal beliefs, the right to wear trousers at school should be upheld.
Published guidelines will make sure all schools can implement the policy in a transparent and consistent manner.
Pupils and parents need the ability to confirm that their schools aren't forcing uniform restrictions that go against the legal guidelines.
School leaders need specific guidance from DE in how to support girls within school settings.
School Uniforms should be regulated to be plain to avoid high costs i.e schools should not have shirts, tights or blazers that can only be purchased in specialist shops
Schools absolutely need to be held accountable. The legislation on its own is not sufficient. Clear guidelines for schools, pupils and parents needs to be in place.
Schools need clear guidance as they often make up rules to suit their own ethos and differ greatly from one another with puts pupils at a disadvantage based on postcode.
Schools should all be given clear instructions with no option to override the bill
Silly question, why would it be a secret? Give people the information they need to stop politicians thinking they rule the world.
So long as the guidelines reflect any pupil's right to wear trousers. I am very aware that the current DE Minister is a man who for some reason has opposed girls' rights to wear trousers up until this point.
Strongly agree so long as the guidelines change to allow girls the choice to wear trousers. Really am dumbstruck this needs a bill to permit it!!
It should be mandatory for the girls to choose skirts or trousers or both!
Stupid question - why wouldn't it publish them? What's the alternative - a secret uniform policy?
The DE must publish guidelines which support the dignity of all pupils including transgender students
The DE need to be held accountable for all their decision making. They do not consider staff pupils or parents and it's about time they are made do the work they are being paid for.
The DE should be transparent and open to public scrutiny

The DE should tell every school to announce that girls are allowed to wear trousers. Without this, it creates a sexist divide between genders in social spaces
The DofE needs to be more clear with its plans. Too many public members are left in the dark until the DofE drops a bombshell of ill advised policy amendments that are nonsensical and leave professionals and parents/guardians struggling to support their young people. Clarity is key and informed clarity should be sought by direct contact and communication with professionals.
The guidelines should be published and parents given easy access to them. I believe many schools choose to ignore the guidelines as they view them as such and optional. Parents should be aware when their child's school is not following guidelines so they can request an explanation as to why they choose not to follow the published guidelines.
The public should be able to be aware of the guidelines and the reasons behind them.
This is basic governmental transparency - not publishing this is ridiculous.
This is useful for if schools that wish to not follow this guidance, parents and pupils know for certain that this isn't being followed.
This should be transparent and open. There is no other way. No church groups should have a say on what girls are wearing. That is inherently wrong.
To make sure schools can't bypass what is intended by this bill
Transparency is important. Many schools are continuing to do what they want to a degree, particularly around sports kit. Having everything in black and white ensures all schools are following the rules.
Transparency is key.
Transparency is the only way parents will understand if the school is imposing rules on pupils or the department. Parents can then choose schools based upon this.
Uniform helps with issues like lack of funds in families, inappropriate clothing to school and saves the need to choose the clothing to wear day to day. Uniform put everyone on a more level playing field.
We strongly agree that DE should publish their guidelines. When discussing this clause members said, "There is nothing wrong with more transparency" and "It makes sense that young people can see if their school is compliant with the new regulations". We believe that all students have the right to know if their school is compliant just as this member said during our discussion, and that full transparency is absolutely essential for young people.
Why would you NOT publish?
Without clear guidelines by a governing body, some school administrators may still use their own prerogative to uphold previous uniform criteria. The DE publishing its guidelines will give schools, pupils and parents/carers clear directive to support Clause 1 of the bill
Yes- guidelines that all schools must allow all pupils to wear trousers
Yes otherwise schools won't act
Yes. I believe it is appropriate, and necessary, for the Department of Education to publish clear guidance alongside the Bill. However, the guidance should explicitly state that uniform policies must be gender-neutral and that pupils must be given genuine choice over whether they wear trousers or skirts. Schools should not be able to technically comply with the legislation while creating pressure or stigma around pupils who choose trousers. The guidance should also address affordability, availability, comfort, dignity, menstruation, weather and participation in school activities. Most importantly, it should make clear that clothing choices should not be restricted or dictated by outdated gender stereotypes. The Department should also provide clear guidance to schools on how to implement the change consistently, so that a pupil's right to choose trousers does not depend on which school they attend.

Agree – 14 comments
As long the guidelines are not overly restrictive
Guidance, As a representative of a small school it also needs to be suitable for all schools eg our only logo required item is our school jumper, every thing else is generic and can be bought in multiple locations. We can't approach a variety of businesses for competitive rates for our one piece of compulsory clothing as we can barely secure one supplier due to our small enrolment.
Guidelines should be publicly available to ensure proper adherence.
I believe all children and young people should have the choice to wear the uniform option they feel most comfortable in. For example, pupils should be able to choose trousers or a skirt without restrictions based on gender. School uniform guidance should promote comfort, choice, inclusion and equality.
If this makes sure that all people identifying as female have the right to wear trousers in any educational setting then it is appropriate to have guidance published to ensure no matter which school to go to the right to wear trousers is available to you.
It will be important to publish them but it will be as important to make sure all schools are allowing and implementing the changes
Pricing and accessibility should be considered to ensure all uniform items are affordable, parents should not have to purchase bespoke trousers from specific stores.
The concept of uniforms is very practical. The actually execution of them particularly for girls is very impractical. My lived experience of 3 girls in secondary school is that the girls wear the same uniform summer or winter no matter the weather. This makes no sense whatsoever . If you personally were made wear exactly the same items and layers on a 21 degree day in summer and -1degree in winter I imagine there would be considerable pushback.
The DE should publish guidelines on the cost of school uniform and ensure that families can provide plain alternatives without school branding for items such as PE uniform.
The public will look for accountability and guidance and it should be the DE that supply it.
Their's no reason I can see why it shouldn't be published.
This allows for consistent approaches
Transparency is always a worthwhile pursuit.
Yes, there should be clear guidelines. I'm from the North of Ireland. Our schools have set uniforms that can only be bought from suppliers of our schools so that our uniform are uniform. No confusion.
Neither agree nor disagree – 13 comment
Don't know if it would make a difference. Too many men in grey suits making decisions for ordinary people that they have no idea about!
Guidelines can be misinterpreted. They should be firmer and aim to be inclusive.
I think the DE may feel they have a duty to lay down guidance. I wonder possibly of the common sense when it is being debated in 2026 about the decision for girls to wear trousers to school or not. Yes uniforms should be smart, but they should be comfortable and practical. My kids school don't allow sports hoodies to be worn under blazers in winter as it's not part of the uniform! Even though the heating is broken and the teachers are wearing a coat inside! Also the kids can't take off their blazers routinely in class in the summer, even though the classrooms are boiling! No sense. The uniforms need to be affordable also. I bought a new blazer for my son the other day it cost £99. I support the uniform recycle scheme and regularly share clothes with other parents once kids have outgrown them.
I, would be beneficial so that all schools can follow the appropriate guidelines, I understand some schools might slightly differ from the guidelines.
It is fine for the DE to publish guideline, as long as they make clear that they are only guideline and not mandatory for schools to follow
It should be up to each individual school. The only thing government should monitor is the cost for families
It's disappointing that a matter like this needs to be brought before assembly - could it not have been sorted via quicker routes or agreements?

Might be useful to know because schools may only be publishing their requirements and maybe not the full E.A guidelines.
no idea what difference publishing makes
Only if schools are preventing girls from wearing trousers
Providing guidelines doesn't really help bring down the cost of uniforms. It would be good to see the bill include provisions to stop the need for branded expensive gear for kids.
They are guidelines, not requirements.
Uniforms are outdated in general. The school uniform policy is very strict as it is. Majority of the clothing is uncomfortable nor necessary. Not only does it overlook the comfort of girls, it also overlooks to comfort of children in general who have sensory issues, and find the tight shirts and tie around their neck uncomfortable and almost like a choking hazard. A branded jumper/t-shirt/ hoody and joggers should be an option for all children at all schools
Disagree – 5 comments
I feel it takes power away from schools and exposes those who have strong values about distinguishing male and female.
I wouldn't think any person would be bothered enough to change just for occasional assemblies and people changing uniforms for assemblies would just abide time and eat up the learning hours.
Schools don't adhere to guidelines. When approached they openly admit they're only guidelines that don't have to be followed this must be made law.
The DE should be concerned with learning/education, not what the students are wearing.
The parents of the children should have to first and foremost to be able to make this decision
Strongly disagree – 8 comments
As long as girls are afforded the opportunity to wear skirts the uniform policies should be left to individual schools
I am against this obligation because of the overall impact it will have on Independent Christian Schools
I'm not 100% sure what this question concerns. But if it concerns the difference between the DE making a recommendation to schools and the DE publishing its ruling for schools to implement; then I am content for the DE to make a recommendation for schools to consider; but I am not content for the DE/Assembly to publish a law that must be followed by all schools.
Individual schools should be able to decide themselves. We introduced "phone free" environment and have no issue with upskirting. We had consulting phase with all stakeholders 2 years ago and have opted for girls to wear longer pleated skirts that has changed the dynamic of how uniforms look
The department of Education is headed up by men and women who think it is appropriate to teach children things that I am ashamed and embarrassed to know about. What remit have these fools to advise on anything let alone the dress of innocent children.
They should have no say they should just accept it as it's a equality issue
Waste of time and resources. This requires schools to set the rules.
Why should old people like us tell young people what to wear
Don't know – 5 comments
Don't understand the question
I am not sure that anyone should have the right to either make someone wear a skirt or trousers, but having oversight by the DE is important to stop schools taking a hard stance one way or the other
I'm not sure what this means.
Is the de the department of education? The act should take precedence
Whilst I think it is importance for standards to be set and met, is this really a good use of public funding? We have kids going hungry and children awaiting medical support and diagnosis.

11: Do you have any comments on Clause 3?

Yes – 133 comments
1.08.2027 is too late, should be straight away
A choice between trousers or skirt is needed!
A clause needs to be brought in like England that you are only allowed a maximum of 3 branded school items in the uniform including PE gear
Again guidelines must be mandatory not just guidelines.
All pupils (male and female) should be given the option to wear trousers to and in school.
And why not also skirts for the boys if they so wish?
Any amendments need to be set out clearly and widely publicised to ensure all impacted are aware of the new rules and not fall foul due to being unaware.
As soon as possible!
August 2027 is a year away, surely this could be implemented quicker
August 2027 seems a long time away? A whole academic year! Just to allow them to wear trousers? Should be implemented before the Autumn half term. Its only words on paper get on with it.
Be better if it could happen sooner
Children should be allowed to wear clothing that promotes dignity and comfort
CiNI supports Clause 3. We consider the period between completion of Second Stage in June 2026 and 1 August 2027 to be a reasonable and proportionate timeframe within which to prepare for effective implementation of the new statutory right. This provides sufficient lead-in time for the Department to revise its guidelines, communicate the new requirements clearly and engage proactively with schools, governing bodies, children and young people, parents and other relevant stakeholders. Schools will also have time to review their uniform policies and make any necessary changes to communications, procedures and procurement arrangements before the new provisions take effect. As highlighted elsewhere in our response, effective implementation will be critical. The revised guidelines should be clear and unambiguous that the right applies consistently to all pupils and should not be subject to additional permission, justification or unnecessary procedural barriers at school level. CiNI would encourage the Department to use the implementation period actively rather than simply awaiting the commencement date. This should include the development of an implementation and communication strategy, direct engagement with schools and accessible, child-friendly information so that pupils and families understand the new right before it comes into effect. The lead-in period also provides an opportunity to establish a baseline against which implementation can subsequently be assessed, including identifying where trouser choice is already available and where changes will be required. CiNI therefore considers the proposed timeframe both reasonable and proportionate. The priority should be to use that time effectively to ensure that, from August 2027, the statutory entitlement is understood, consistently applied and free from practical or procedural barriers, with implementation subsequently monitored through engagement with children and young people, schools and families.
Could be faster maybe, we've waited long enough
Frankly, this should be changed immediately. It's a disgrace that a whole additional year group of girls will have to suffer through this outdated and sexist practice.

Fully support
get it done
Get it sorted!
Girls should be able to wear trousers or skirts if they so desire
Girls should be allowed to wear trousers immediately, starting this academic year, Aug 2026
Have it take immediate effect once passed. I cannot imagine it takes a significant effort to update the guidelines and publish it.
The clause should recognise that this is in line with the ethos of cultivating a culture of care (in this case for girls) and a culture of respect for all girls whether they choose to wear trousers or skirts.
How in 2026 is this even a debate?
How will intersectional schools, particularly those that are Christian or religious in scope, react? I believe that some form of verification for the bill actually having been put to action is required, but otherwise I approve of the date.
I agree
I agree with this clause, I think the timeline is reasonable.
I agree with this requirement.
I believe all children and young people should have the choice to wear the uniform option they feel most comfortable in. For example, pupils should be able to choose trousers or a skirt without restrictions based on gender. School uniform guidance should promote comfort, choice, inclusion and equality.
I believe the changes should be immediate and not take a year to implement
I do not believe it should take a full calendar year to decide upon and produce the updated uniform guidelines.
This shows the inefficiencies in the system if it takes a further 12 months to update this.
My daughter should have the right to wear trousers as soon as possible.
I feel it is unfair to both schools and parents to be constantly changing the guidelines around school uniform.
I feel that 1 August 2027 is too far away. If this Bill is being introduced to give pupils greater choice, comfort, dignity and equality, there is no reason for implementation to be delayed for so long. I would support the new guidance being updated and brought into effect as soon as reasonably practicable, so that pupils can benefit from the changes sooner.
I fully think Clause 1 will have a great impact
I just think that it is bizarre any grown adults would oppose young girls who don't want to wear skirts to school. This is 2026, and whether it's trousers or skirts the children are there to be educated and both provide the option of proper and appropriate uniform. I know of many of my friends who attended school in England and it was normal to choose either skirts or trousers, why must Northern Ireland always drag behind? Let kids be kids. Let them dress appropriately but also with comfort and ready to learn and have fun with their friends.
I like it
I see no reason this should take until August 27 to implement. Officials should be progressing the policy from final stage of the bill.
I strongly agree with Clause 3. Setting a clear deadline for updating the Department of Education's school uniform guidelines ensures that the new rights introduced by the Bill are implemented consistently, promptly, and with full accountability. Requiring the DE to revise its existing guidance by 1 August 2027 provides schools with certainty and prevents long delays or uneven adoption across Northern Ireland. This clause strengthens the practical impact of the Bill by ensuring that the right to wear trousers and the associated safeguarding and equality benefits is fully reflected in official policy. Clause 3 is a sensible and necessary mechanism to guarantee that the reforms are not only legislated but actually delivered in a timely and coherent way for pupils, parents, and schools.
I think it is shameful that 2026/2027 there even has to be a debate/vote. Girls should always been allowed to wear trousers should they have wished to. Northern Ireland needs to come out of the Dark ages! Girls/young women need protection and their wishes need to be listened to and respected. Long long overdue. Get on with it!
I think it should be implemented much sooner. I don't imagine it would be difficult to source suitable trousers.

Perhaps allowing plain black or grey to begin with and then allow time for design and tailoring to be adjusted for the following year.
I think that all pupils should be able to wear trousers as part of their uniform if they wish to do so.
I think that girls should still have a choice to wear a skirt
I think the current guidelines should be left as they are.
I think this should be taken care of as quickly as possible
I understand that these things take a lot longer than we as the public can maybe get our heads around, but August 2027 does seem like an awfully long time away for us to still be discussing this.
I would like to see it take effect immediately.
I would prefer it to be an earlier date but understand that this process will take unnecessary time to complete.
If not earlier.
if not sooner.
If the current guidelines haven't accommodated girls wearing trousers in 2026 then they're not fit for purpose and need to be replaced.
If the new rules allow to wear trousers then the department existing guidelines should reflect that
If this could be sooner it would be better.
I'm curious as to whether a school can override the choice of an individual.
Immediate effect and uniform shops ready to stock trousers and not stock primary school sports tops.
In this day and age have to legislate on what girls are allowed to wear, whether it's in education or not, is ridiculous. Not to mention the fact that a man is at the forefront of this decision is appalling. Let everyone decide male or female what they want to wear in education.
Information always needs to be correct.
It is good that they are held to a target for implementation if this bill passes.
It is important that school Governors, teachers, parents and pupils all understand why the change is being made.
It is important that the new rules should be implemented as soon as possible.
It needs to come into effect sooner.
It should be brought in earlier than this. It's only allowing trousers not advocating world peace!!
It should be brought in sooner
It should be immediate.
It should be immediately
It should be implemented immediately
It should be implemented in August 2026. Why does it take a whole year to tell schools they must allow girls to wear trousers. If it took less than a year to get the Covid vaccine developed and into people's arms why can't this be done much sooner than a year. It's really not a complicated issue
It should be implemented sooner
It should be mandatory for schools to give this option to pupils, as opposed to guidelines
It should be put into immediate effect. Girls by August 2027 may no longer suffer under such archaic rules but the girls suffering right now are still suffering when something can immediately be done about it. Girls RIGHT NOW are suffering when this could have easily been remedied years ago.
It's common sense
It's a shame the update to DE guidelines is being given another full year before taking effect. Rules should be updated in a shorter time frame
It's terrible that there's such a delay in such a basic thing as allowing females to wear a pair of trousers. This is 2026, not the Victorian era!
Long overdue - should ask age of responders so that older people do not have influence on vote when it is about views of parents and children
Must be made an open matter and not seen as being different...schools must actually promote this and ensure it's seen as choice not children being different or difficult
Must take into account but should be acted on as soon as possible so that another generation of children can be freed from the burden of this outdated policy

Not being able to wear trousers is an outdated sexist tradition. I would have been warmer and more comfortable wearing trousers as a student. As an adult I rarely wear skirts due to the limitations that come with them. Why should we force these limitations on our daughters?
Please consider regulated the costs of uniforms that the schools charge. On the mainland you can bulk buy the easy pieces of schoolwear and just buy the blazer but over here each school has its own branded clothing which is charged at their chosen price.
Please follow up with schools how they have worked towards these rules.
Please see previous answer. Affordability Practicality Comfort
Preferably this should be enforceable earlier than August 2027 to allow for young people to avail of the benefits. I'm sure many upper sixth pupils have campaigned in favour of this legislation and should be able to reap the rewards during the final year of school.
Really needs to be brought in sooner rather than postponed for another year
Schools absolutely need to be held accountable. The legislation on its own is not sufficient. Clear guidelines for schools, pupils and parents needs to be in place
Schools don't have to wait until August 2027, they could individually decide to allow trousers to be worn by everyone.
Schools in England allow females to wear trousers or skirts all year round. Like already said in the bill it will prevent up skirting but allowing the girls to feel comfortable whether they are on their period or not. Wearing tights with a skirt isn't an acceptable compromise to boys wearing trousers. Tights are uncomfortable especially with certain chairs that most schools have. In my experience in high school, everyone's body is changing and children can be mean. Trousers can really help with hiding the new changes such as leg hair and this new hormone styled life.
Should be immediate. The timeline should be brought forward.
Should be implemented before August 2027.
Should be instant
Should be much sooner
Should be sooner to prevent "othering" of female children by not allowing them to cover their legs with trousers if they wish to.
Should be sooner.
Should be sooner. Trousers for girls in Scotland have been happening since the early 1990's, we are in the 21st century. There shouldn't be a bill for this, it should be a basic human right for all girls to wear trousers.
Should be updated for coming academic year
Should be updated sooner to allow uniform changes to be incorporated in 27/28 school year
Some primary schools the price and requirements of uniform is ridiculous
Sooner the better
The 1st August is an unreasonable timeline. This should be prepared and ready to share long before the end of the academic year to allow schools to update their policy and parents to prepare according for the following academic year when purchasing uniforms.
The current policy is not fit for purpose. Girls are not allowed at all schools to wear trousers. My own daughter suffered at primary school from the unwanted attention of boys etc
The earlier, the better. Each school must be obliged to fulfil the updating of their school policy by a strict deadline also and have affordable uniformed school trouser options available to pupils and parents.
The guidance is fine, but it should not be legislated into law in my opinion.
The guidelines should be updated before end of June 2027 to take effect in school year 27/28.
The sooner this bill is introduced the better. Girls are at a disadvantage to their ale counterparts so I would be keen to see this moved as quickly as possible.
The sooner this is implemented the better for young women attending our schools.
The State system can set its own standards and guidelines. I don't believe it should be intruding into areas where it affects religious schools which outside this system.

There is absolutely no reason this should take so long. It is frankly ridiculous that in 2026 time and money is being wasted over the right of female citizens to wear trousers.
There is no reason this can't be enacted sooner.
There is not enough information on Clause 3 in this part of the survey to effectively answer.
There needs to be some form of consequence for this not happening, or it will just be delayed forever and students and schools will be disadvantaged.
There's no reason why it can't take immediate effect.
They should be updated before 2027
This Bill should not be passed
This has been going on long enough. Rules should be in effect immediately
This is essential.
This is vital
This needs updated asap. Forcing girls to wear skirts is sexist and has undertones of misogyny. All children have the right to go to school feeling comfortable.
This should be brought forward from 1st August 2027 to allow it be implemented as soon as it is passed
This should be implemented sooner ie start of school year 2026
This should be sooner.
This should happen long before August 2027.
To be implemented asap
Trousers for all should be a given and shouldn't have to wait another year.
We should have the right over or children not the Government or the ED
What in the DUP nonsense is this that anyone could object to girls wearing trousers. Seriously.
Why can changes not be implemented sooner
Why can't it be updated within the next couple of months so school girls can go to school feeling comfortable wearing school trousers. I think pants should be banned and girls allowed to wear shorts that are loose fitting.
Why can't it be sooner? This leaves girls with a whole year more to wait for this update.
Why does it take 1 year to come into effect?
Why is it going to take a full year to publish an update to the guidelines?? It's literally a line - girls are allowed the option of wearing trousers. Not hard.
Why is it necessary to wait another year to facilitate this?
Why not just apply it now.
Why the delay. Can we not be logical and make the needed changes
Why will this take another full year?
Without a deadline this work could easily be ignored.
Yes, this should have been included on the previous bill and needs to be amended asap
Yes. I believe the existing Department of Education guidance should be updated to reflect the new legislation, and I welcome the requirement for this to happen by 1 August 2027.
However, the updated guidance should go further than simply acknowledging that trousers are permitted. It should make clear that pupils must have a genuine and equal choice of uniform options, regardless of sex.
Schools should not be able to comply with the legislation while continuing to present skirts as the expected uniform for girls or creating pressure, stigma or practical barriers for pupils who choose trousers.
The guidance should also address affordability, availability, comfort, dignity, menstruation, weather and participation in school activities. It should make clear that uniform policies must not reinforce outdated gender stereotypes.
I would also encourage the Department to consult directly with pupils when updating the guidance. These rules affect children every day, so their experiences and views should be central to how the guidance is written and implemented.

The purpose of the Bill should be meaningful equality and genuine choice, not simply a technical change to existing uniform policies.

No – 5 comments

I think if possible if passed early, schools should be encouraged to modify their uniform policy kids school year 26/27 if able to roll out a standard uniform trouser for parents to buy mid year.

I think it should come into immediate effect there is no reason for it not to.

No further comment. I've run out of words that in 2026 this is where we are at having to vote for little 4 year old girls to have the ability to wear trousers. Sad

This should have been done years ago. An absolute disgrace.

Well worded 🙌

12: The financial effects of the Bill will be minimal. (See Paragraphs 19 and 20 of the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum.)

Strongly agree – 67 comments
360 quid for a school uniform and sports kit on grammar school. Prices are too high and the required skirts are 40 quid.
A skirt or trousers should be generic and in colours available from the likes of George (Asda) and Tesco.
Any additional costs for reissuing guidance are a direct consequence of the Minister/ Speaker refusing to act at an earlier stage. I suggest they should have considered this 'unintended consequence' of their actions.
As long as no further time is wasted on consultations and other pointless measures.
As long as plain trousers are permitted and not one that dons the school emblems.
Because boys and girls have different body shapes, girls/parents should be allowed to select a style that suits their child's shape and is in a similar colour to the male uniform (e.g., black, grey, or dark grey) and can be purchased from a high street shop/online.
Bog standard trousers are probably cheaper than skirts or dresses
Buying trousers or other leg coverings is not more expensive than buying skirts. Schools already regularly produce new images of pupils in uniform and updated uniform information on websites and in literature such as prospectuses. I believe the change to allowing girls to wear trousers would therefore not impact schools negatively.
Cheaper for trousers than a pleated skirt too
CiNI broadly agrees that the direct financial effects of the Bill are likely to be minimal. The Bill does not require families to purchase an additional uniform item; rather, it ensures that trousers are available as a choice within existing uniform arrangements. For some schools, trousers are already an established option for all pupils. As noted in our opening comments, there may be some market displacement effects. Increased uptake of trousers may reduce demand for skirts or other traditionally gender-specific items while increasing demand for trousers. This is principally a change in the composition of existing uniform expenditure rather than a significant additional cost arising from the Bill, although any transitional effects should be monitored, and there should be clear communication to suppliers at the earliest opportunity. CiNI's long-standing position is that school uniforms should, first and foremost, be affordable and comfortable for children and young people. The implementation of this Bill should reinforce that principle. The right to wear trousers must not result in families being required to purchase expensive, specialised or unnecessarily branded garments. CiNI believes schools should adopt uniform policies based, wherever possible, on generic items and readily available colours that can be purchased from multiple suppliers. This promotes competition and parental choice, facilitates reuse and second-hand provision, and helps reduce the financial burden of school uniform on families. Trousers provided for under the new entitlement should follow the same approach. There may also be some minimal administrative costs associated with guidance, communication, engagement and monitoring, but these are necessary to support effective implementation. Overall, affordability and availability of uniform items should continue to be monitored to ensure that cost does not become a practical barrier to any child exercising the new statutory right.
Citizens pay for their own uniforms, and that is a massive undertaking for people living on a pinch. Creating a wider net of uniform will lessen the cost on the average family!
Cost of a skirt will be similar to trousers.
For parents and pupils yes but oh my god how much has the tax payer spent while you debate / consult this topic to death, just get on with it. Hurry up!

Further to this, I feel there needs to be more freedom to purchase less school branded uniform which can be very costly, especially for younger children who can grow out of their uniform quickly. This is not economical in today's climate for parents to pay 100's of pounds for school uniform.
Girls feeling comfortable to learn has no price. Forcing them to wear skirts will impact their mental health and the Education Minister is not going to give up his salary to cover it.
Girls wearing trousers saves money. It reduces buying tights which are expensive and get holes and ladders, they are also so uneenvironmentally friendly.
How exactly are we having this conversation in 2026??? There's no difference between the cost of trousers and a skirt.
I actually think it will be cheaper as the girls skirt and PE skort seem to be more expensive than regular trousers/shorts
I agree that the financial effects of the Bill are likely to be minimal. However, this should not be used as a reason to underestimate the importance of clear and comprehensive guidance for schools.
As the Department will already be required to update and reissue its guidance, this provides an opportunity to ensure that the guidance on school uniforms is clear, consistent and reflects the new legislative requirements. Clear Departmental guidance should help schools implement the legislation consistently, reduce uncertainty for pupils, parents and schools, and potentially prevent complaints and legal challenges.
I would therefore encourage the Department to ensure that updated school uniform guidance is published promptly and is sufficiently detailed to support schools in meeting their new responsibilities.
I can't foresee any financial effects except changing the website text if each school to add trousers to the girls list of uniform.
I don't really think there will be that much of a financial impact but regardless of that every school pupil has the right to feel respected and confident and a lot of young girls would probably feel more comfortable if they were allowed to wear trousers.
I feel the guidelines have to state that schools cannot state that girls must wear skirts at certain times, which could make the decision to buy trousers an additional cost.
I hope that schools will be discouraged from forcing parents to purchase expensive and branded goods including trousers and tracksuits
I think it will reduce school uniforms prices for girls. Skirts and pinafores with school logo is like £50 summer dresses are overpriced especially secondary. A plain pair black trousers are sufficient and will drop the price significantly to like £10
I would think especially for some secondary schools trousers would be a less expensive option than some skirts/ pinafores currently required. It would also open up the shops where these trousers would be available instead of certain uniform shops.
If anything economies of scale would increase when ordering trousers
If anything the bill might be result in cost reductions as trousers generally cost less than specialist skirts
If anything the financial effect on parents of girls will be positive—my daughter's grammar skirt is only available from certain retailers and is expensive due to its particular style. If she was allowed a basic black trouser we would have many more options.
If anything the potential increase in costs from parents buying trousers as well as skirts will only be improved and mitigated by the fact that trousers can be handed down from brother's to sisters or vis versa in the event of two children in a home, which wouldn't be possible previously with opposite sex children.
If anything, financial obligations on parents will be lessened, as consumables like tights will be required less.
It could be beneficial for school uniform manufacturers to ensure trousers are made available that are fitted to girl figures and bodies, as opposed to just allowing them to buy boys' trousers, if the legislation is to meet its goal of improving confidence in girls in schools. I could expect this to incur some financial impact. Either way, girls and gender-non-conforming students should be permitted to wear trousers fitted for either masculine or feminine bodies.
It is likely to save money from a parent and public viewpoint. On the cost of uniforms and availability of uniform items and from a school risk of litigation as a result of girls and young women wearing skirts at school being targets for abuse by boys, young men and men

It only takes admin to update the policy which is already being paid. It's a small price to pay for the benefit.
It's a pity that the Committee has to bring this forward when the DE had a perfect opportunity to include this with their revised guidance.
Just buying trousers instead of a skirt
Make budget friendly uniform availability a requirement for all schools.
Many girls have a basic black leggings already in the wardrobe. Non branded leggings or active trousers wear are inexpensive.
As I said regular tights replacement is expensive
More often than not, skirts are more expensive than trousers, a bit like the "pink tax".
My daughter's skirts cost £40 each. Trousers are able to be bought in supermarkets for half the price
Parents buy the uniform. Trousers are the same price, if not cheaper, than skirts.
People are struggling. It's that simple.
The financial pressure on families is well recorded and evidenced.
More needs to be done to reduce cost impacts.
Positive impact on finances for families
Provided that the colour and style of trousers are widely available in shops and are not branded by the school
Pupils and parents will be free to choose skirt or trousers so they don't have to opt to buy trousers if they already have a skirt and can't afford to purchase more uniform. Those who do need to purchase new uniform will have a choice. If trousers are kept plain black/navy/grey with no special colourings or markings, it should be easy to purchase them at supermarkets at cheap prices. People can also obtain trousers from local school uniform preloved/swap shops which many schools actually put on,
School skirts are actually more expensive than a plain pair of trousers
School trousers and school skirts are a similar price point. I need to buy new school clothes every year anyway as children grow fast. Allowing girls to wear the same clothing as boys, actually means I can use hand downs from other family members that would have gone to waste otherwise.
School trousers are cheaper than skirts so it's of financial benefit to parents
Schools have specific requirements for skirts have pleats being a certain length all of which have a higher cost than trousers! I have 3 sons and 1 daughter and her skirt costs a lot more than the boys trousers
Smart school trousers can be bought from any high street shop or supermarket. They reduce the need for specialist uniform stockists (unless individual schools insist on specific cuts/colours etc., in which case that is on the school, not the bill)
Supermarket trousers are significantly more affordable than the skirts.
The cost of amending the wording on the proposed draconian guidelines banning girls and young women from wearing trousers, in order to reflect a more sensible stance, is a very small price to pay.
The financial impact of this bill can only be positive. I have a grammar school aged daughter who exercised her right to request trousers rather than a skirt this year. Two pairs of navy school trousers cost me £12. Her skirt cost 65
There shouldn't be any financial implications at all. In fact there should be savings
There's no compulsion for any one to make the change. It is optional. If anything it will be better as some schools have very specific skirts that are expensive whereas girls will be able to buy supermarket trousers the same as boys
This is a good idea, and I agree that the costs to schools should be minimal to zero. The costs to parents will only be dependent on what their children chose to wear as part of their uniform choices. Schools that chose to ignore this do so at their own financial peril, but frankly it's the mid-2020s, who cares what article(s) of clothing a person wears on the lower half of their body? Anyone should be allowed to wear whatever they like.
Trouser cost v skirt cost - shouldn't be much in it if anything trousers may be cheaper
Trousers & skirts are approx the same price.
Trousers and skirts are not expensive. As long as schools do not make branded or school linked an option to keep it cheap
Trousers are cheaper and more readily available than the numerous types of skirt available for different schools. This in itself is more cost effective.
Trousers are generally cheaper than uniform compliant skirts.

Trousers are much cheaper than the school skirts often these are not available in shops such as non school wear stockists...this will make this much more affordable.
Trousers cost less than a school skirt and can be used for more than one occasion
Trousers generally cost less than dresses and skirts. And have pockets. People like pockets.
Trousers will more likely be a cheaper option for girls going forward
We're paying through the nose for branded uniform items. A pair of grey trousers isn't going to break the bank.
Well, boys can afford trousers and some girls schools have very expensive skirts that couldn't really be worn anywhere else, there a chance it could be cheaper. Same for allowing tracksuits and shorts.
Yes. It's little girls wearing trousers. I didn't realise we lived in Texas.
Agree – 22 comments
As before, the long trousers, shorts, and skirts all have to be reasonably affordable, and the price tag should be controlled at the upper limit. The reason why the price tag should be controlled is because when there is no price control at all, there is a risk of division happening between pupils from poorer background who can only buy cheaper brands, versus those who come from more affluent backgrounds who don't have to rely on them.
As long as schools are not allowed to specify a specific school uniform supplier for school trousers that must be used, as these can be restrictive (only one option which might not be a good fit for any individual) and the costs can be excessive when compared to using a mainstream shop such as M&S or George, etc.
Based on feedback from Schoolwear Association members operating in Northern Ireland, we agree that the financial effects of the Bill are likely to be minimal.
As the Bill expands the range of permitted uniform options rather than requiring pupils to purchase additional items, we do not expect it to create any costs for either parents or schools.
Additionally, our understanding is that many schools already permit pupils to wear trousers as an alternative to skirts. The Bill would therefore largely formalise existing practice rather than introduce an entirely new type of uniform requirement across the school system.
We would consequently not expect the legislation itself to result in significant changes to existing school uniform provision.
However, if this needs to be done to apply this to ALL schools in NI and allow fairness for ALL of our girls, it will be worth the financial impacts.
I agree that the financial effects of the Bill are minimal. The proposed changes focus on rights, clarity, and consistency rather than imposing new costs on schools or families. Because the Bill primarily updates guidance and ensures equal access to existing uniform options, it does not require schools to purchase new stock or redesign uniforms. The Explanatory and Financial Memorandum makes clear that any administrative adjustments fall well within the Department of Education's normal operational responsibilities. In practice, the Bill strengthens equality and pupil wellbeing without creating financial burdens, making it a proportionate and cost-effective reform.
I cannot see how there would be any significant additional cost. These children grow out of uniform so quickly, often replacing skirts each year, they can simply buy trousers instead at their next uniform shop.
I don't see reason why it should be expensive. I understand there might be costs in changing guidelines an updating it but it's only giving th option to wear a trouser
I'd like to see an end to parents being put into debt every September through schools forcing them to buy uniforms at certain shops. When they could buy a blazer somewhere cheaper and iron on the school badge. It's unfair, especially to lower-income and larger families. They should also be able to buy shirts, jumpers, trousers at our excellent supermarkets. There is no reason why not. Am fed up with listening to the same old, same old on the Nolan Show every September, yet nothing ever changes.
If anything the bill will make uniforms less expensive as trousers are typically standard colours available from supermarkets whereas skirts are often special colours or shapes available from only a single supplier.
If uniform shops get pre orders on trousers for girls I don't see any issue arising. Uniform skirts cost about the same as trousers. Demanding parents pay for "on brand" clothing for children who are growing is impractical, but here we are.
Chinese schools have the students report in tracksuits most days.

Initially, it may be more expensive as parents& pupil need to try few pairs and see what will work for them.
It will be up to the kids as to whether they wish to switch to trousers or shorts or not and hopefully most schools will have the option of supermarket school trousers / shorts and so the impact on parents financially should be minimal.
Probably cheaper to buy trousers and socks than endless tights
Pupils wellbeing is the priority not finance.
Re paragraph 20 - the risk of non compliance and subsequent public purse costs is presumably always there with any new legislation. The risk here seems small, and worth taking in order to protect basic human dignity.
School uniforms have to be purchased anyway. As long as the trousers aren't branded, there should be minimal financial effects.
Schools could still foist additional cost of women's tailored trousers onto parents, I think parents should be able to get any smart trousers from a retailer as long as they're in the school's assigned colour. No reason to force a specific make for smart trousers.
Skirts are often more expensive than trousers so you will likely save money if switching to trousers but greater regulation is required for a limit to be put on costs of uniforms
sports kits are very expensive Sometime the sports kits is nearly as expensive as the uniform It should be made more available and not designed by one particular company
The question isn't very clear whether it means positive or negative financial effects. If anything I think it will have positive effects as trousers are more economical eg you can let the hems down to make them longer as teenagers grow.
Unless girls have already bought their skirts
Whilst there is additional cost buying school trousers, it's likely those who really want them will purchase instead of a skirt if necessary. PE trousers are usually already worn. It may actually help parents save money if no longer required to buy a PE skirt/skort if no longer compulsory
Neither agree nor disagree – 13 comments
Actually give trousers as an option levels the playing field for girls and boys nd means equity of cost for uniform is more likely
Any negative effects of the bill will be minimal but the major impact will be beneficial to girls who will not be mandated to wear skirts
Blazers need banned. Supermarket items must be allowed. What is branded items? Is it items with school logo or made by big labels such as O Neil's/Kukari?
Allow all kids to wear track suits with school logo and offer a shorts/leggings/skirt/skort option. They need to be comfortable to learn.
I can see hand-me-downs being further enhanced by this change, which would be a net financial benefit to parents and would also be more environmentally friendly.
It doesn't matter if it will, the reason behind the bill supercedes any cost
It will be cheaper to wear trousers than having to purchase tights frequently.
It will be huge for the girls who do not want to wear a skirt. It will be minimal in the impact of everyone else. It will have little to no effect on anyone else other than the girls benefiting from it.
It would surely cause the price of trousers to increase or decrease given the sudden shift in manufacturing. But it should hopefully make fitting easier. Truly Fare and other uniform manufacturers should always optimally have some skirts in stock, and donate or offer surpluses to those who might need them.
It's hard to know. It could possibly add a financial strain on some parents who feel they have to buy both skirts and trousers for their daughters. While this probably wouldn't be required by the school, peer pressure and social stuff may influence it.
The Financial Memorandum anticipates minimal financial effects, but appears to concentrate on the Department's direct expenditure. I would welcome further assessment of the potential financial and administrative impact on individual schools and families, particularly given the existing statutory emphasis on affordability of school uniforms.
Trousers are actually cheaper than skirts in some shops so it will be less expensive.

What is there to agree with? It shouldn't cost anything bar the legislative duties of the assembly to just permit kids to wear trousers. Why does this even have to go so far for consultation.
While the financial effects SHOULD be minimal, we have seen how the DofE have poorly spent funds on their own ill-gotten gains (holidays abroad for example) so I will wait to see how this goes.
Disagree – 12 comments
Changes in school uniforms are always costly
I disagree but only on my reading and understanding of paragraph 20. I believe that the ability for children and young people to be able to make the choice to wear trousers may have a positive financial impact on families and could be the first step to ensuring that uniforms are financially affordable. Trousers in arrays of colours and cuts are more readily available and accessible and if schools choose their trouser options thoughtfully families may feel a financial relief in being able to purchase commercially available trousers rather than specialist made skirts costing £40+.
I feel allowing the option of wearing trousers will save parents money as alot of schools have unique and expensive skirts, while trousers are more readily available.
If anything the cost will be less. Young women won't have to buy shorts for under skirts or tights for winter because they will have both warmth and dignity.
I personally will now only need to buy bottoms as opposed to pinafore, shorts, tights.
It is less expensive to purchase standard grey/black trousers over specific school skirts, socks and tights.
It will be minimal for most schools who currently have trousers, shorts and tracksuits as part of their uniform(as mine does) It will be much more costly for schools who must go through consultations with stakeholders, source samples, try to find suppliers and ensure that they have sufficient quantities of stock for their needs. It is not as simple as saying, girls can wear black trousers, particularly for secondary schools. There will be no used clothes sales for parents, or the ability to pass on a pair of trousers that were grown out of but hardly worn, as happens with skirts currently. Trousers are a garment that will need replaced more frequently than skirts. You cannot simply buy them a bit long to allow for growth. They are more likely to get torn or damaged during daily school life.
More choice will bring about more financial outlay as trousers will be used in winter and skirts in summer.
Please see previous comments
Shirts are expensive especially the bizarre pleated ones at my daughter's school.
Some pupils may wish to have the choice to wear shirts or trousers during the school year. This would increase the cost to parents.
Specific post-primary school skirts in particular are usually much more expensive than the generic black and grey trousers that can be bought in supermarkets these days. School skirts are usually only available through a handful of handpicked school suppliers and so can be sold at a premium. Allowing all pupils to wear trousers will reduce uniform costs.
Switching to tracksuits for school uniforms would save families so much money.
Strongly disagree – 8 comments
Changing uniforms will always add extra costs to parents
I do not think that the government should prosecute a school which does not comply. My reasoning is that each school board of governors should have freedom to make up their own mind as to whether girls are permitted to wear trousers or not.
It will be cheaper for all families
Many schools require school branded PE kit and uniforms at inflated prices, this has severe impact on the finacally insecure families
On an individual family level know.
How much money is being wasted on this ridiculous bill?
The financial impact will be greatly positive. My daughter gets 2 skirts they cosy £45 each so £90 for 2 skirts. Black trousers which the boys wear and my daughter could wear cost less than £20 for 2 pairs of trousers. It will save me a small fortune.
There should be zero financial implications and this should never have had to be a discussion so any money used to bring forward this bill is totally gross misappropriation of public funds

Trousers will be more expensive than skirts and especially for girls who grow, develop and change shape during adolescence.

It will be more difficult to regulate the type of trousers worn and or bought.

Don't know – 4 comments

Depends if you're using a provider who will charge more for making women shaped trousers with pockets. Be sensible.

I would hope it would make it cheaper as uniforms are extremely expensive. To have trousers may help lower costs but that depends on how the schools and the pupils interpret the rules.

It really just depends on what the school ruling is for trousers in school. If schools want pupils to wear school branded trousers for their uniform they tend to be expensive compared to trousers and leggings you would buy casually. Not to mention, a school branded bottoms are equivalent- if not maybe slightly higher pricing than skirts and socks/ leggings combined depending on the fabric and school.

We hear that about any bills. The cost should be published!

13: Additional comments and observations

447 comments
3000 characters aren't enough. Period dignity. Equality. Preserving the dignity of children who lack capacity.
A formal dress code should be issued to school staff including the right of male teachers to opt out of wearing neck ties.
about time...
Absolutely correct thing to do!
Actually no I think I have said all I wanted to, thanks.
Adolescence is a vulnerable time in people's lives and we should be doing everything we can to help young people prepare for the real world while treating them with respect and allowing them autonomy. In the professional sphere of the modern world, women can wear trousers. The same should go for school pupils.
Again I am concerned that this is even a debate and the level of resource being put into something that should be totally acceptable in this day and age.
All girls have the right to choose to wear trousers.
All pupils deserve the right to be comfortable in their uniform. Many classroom activities involve movement around the school. Many times they are asked to sit on floors. Trousers would leave everyone more comfortable. And lessen the chance of being exposed.
All pupils ought to be able to wear trousers, shorts or skirts; as they wish. Shorts need to be an option too; trousers are too warm to be comfortable in summer.
All pupils should have the same right to wear the same uniform and it should not be chosen for them upon their gender. If a female pupil wishes to wear a skirt/dress this is fine but they should also have the choice to wear trousers .
The current uniform guideline is an archaic way of thinking and belongs in the past .
Allowing everyone to wear shorts will be particularly useful during heatwaves.
Any Assembly member who wants to oppose the bill should be required to come in and vote wearing a gym skirt. And get the bus to Stormont that day. Sorry for the scorn but the ridiculousness of the situation needs pointing out. You don't get to have a right at your work and vote to keep it from others, especially not young girls whose vulnerability has been more than highlighted in recent events.
Any school that objects to this should be carefully examined as to what the reasons for not allowing girls to wear trousers. It is an extremely outdated practice to force girls to wear skirts and could be seen as a wider issue within the school. If they are pushing for girls to wear skirts what other stereotypical gender roles are they still enforcing within their educational practices.
Anybody who objects to young females wearing trousers at school should be monitored closely as they may pose a risk to the safety and wellbeing of young females. The welfare of the child is paramount.
Anything less than allowing girls to wear trousers is archaic and very strange
As a child who was greatly affected by being forced to wear skirts in school, this bill is something I care about immensely. For the first few years of my education I was uncomfortable and unsafe. It wasn't until [REDACTED] [REDACTED] be allowed to wear trousers that I was finally able to continue my primary school years in peace. I was able to play outside without freezing my legs. I was able to run and play during lunchtime without fear of my underwear flashing. And I never again [REDACTED] for trying to peek up my skirt.
Allowing girls the option to wear trousers if they wish is a matter of dignity. They deserve to feel comfortable and safe in their schools.
Any pushback against this Bill is nonsensical. Anyone demanding that little girls be restricted to skirts at all times does not care for their dignity, and should not have any say in matters that affect their welfare.

As a female it's difficult getting through the teenage years without worrying that blood loss could be seen whilst wearing skirts especially in mixed schools. I can't see any reason why a girl can't wear trousers in school and workplace as long as they are neat and tidy
As a former pupil of a school where I had to wear a pinafore and ankle length skirt through my years, I don't see how allowing students the option to wear trousers would have any affect on the school or the learning done there.
As a grammar school pupil in the 80s, I had to wear a skirt as part of my uniform. Like many girls my age I had extremely heavy periods and on more than one occasion I leaked blood onto the back of my skirt which I then had to wear for the rest of the day. You can imagine the effect that had on an already shy and self-conscious teenager. In later years I was also the victim of upskirting. The fact that this issue is being up for debate is absolutely ridiculous. Girls should be able to wear trousers if they wish, we no longer live in Victorian times. If anything, girls will be able to cover up more with trousers, or perhaps this is why Mr Girvan objects to it. It would certainly make you wonder.
As a mother of [REDACTED] I totally agree that girls should be allowed to wear trousers to school. My [REDACTED] has always asked why the girls need to "have their legs out" for school. Not to mention the sensory issues that come with school tights.. my daughter prefers to wear leggings outside of school, shorts in the warmer weather.. in our local nursery school while summer dresses are permitted, girls aren't able to use the slides and other outdoor equipment if they aren't wearing a "modesty layer" of shorts under the dresses.
As a mother, I completely support this uniform bill. In this day and age, it's frustrating that we are still having to fight for something as basic and sensible as allowing girls the option to wear trousers to school. My daughter absolutely hates wearing her skirt, it makes her feel uncomfortable, self-conscious, and restricted during everyday school activities. Uniform policies should be about creating an inclusive, practical, and equal environment for all students. Trousers offer warmth, comfort, and the freedom to move, sit, and play without constant worry. We preach progressiveness and modern equality in education, yet forcing girls into skirts feels hopelessly out of touch. It is time to give our girls the choice, respect their comfort, and update uniform guidelines to reflect the modern world they are growing up in.
As a parent of a child with autism, who cannot wear skirts, I support the bill entirely. Girls should not be forced to wear skirts. It is much more comfortable to wear trousers, especially during menstruation.
As a past pupil I fully welcome the changes as it was a very uncomfortable time in inappropriate clothing
[REDACTED] initiated a project to review the school uniform. This project was the result of discussions with teaching staff, the pupils and the members of the Board of Governors regarding the standard of uniform being worn - for example, the skirts worn by girls were too short, the boys were very relaxed in their standard of uniform, the outdoor coats being worn were varied and during very hot summer term conditions, the uniform became very relaxed. Then, there were no DE regulations or guidance regarding the wearing of school uniform - the school management was conscious of having a uniform which was value for money. A questionnaire was devised and pupils, their parents, school staff, and members of the Board of Governors responded. The overwhelming response was - all pupils to wear a school blazer ([REDACTED] polyester mix) available from any retail outlets with the school badge purchased and sewn on the front blazer pocket; the girls were given the option of wearing skirts or trousers. It was felt that the wearing of trousers for girls was to protect their dignity (i.e. not wearing short skirts) and better protection in the winter months. (The school was located in [REDACTED]). The blazer with school badge, school shirt, school tie and school jumper were staple items of uniform along with trousers (boys and girls) and a skirt. The PE uniform was that of a white t-shirt with the school badge/logo, leggings, shorts and trainers. In very hot summer term weather for comfort, the pupils could wear the PE uniform - this was allowed by the direction of [REDACTED] and the school leadership team.
My observation regarding School Uniform Bill is that it becomes too prescriptive - how will this Bill be policed?
As a schoolgirl I hated having to wear a skirt to school. Even in the height of summer I would wear tights as I hated my legs being exposed. All children should have the right to wear the items of clothing that make school a more comfortable environment for them. They are there to learn, not to hold up some old fashioned ideas about gender norms.

As a woman who left school 25 years ago and has no school age children, I was frankly shocked to discover that this Bill was only coming to the table now. I had thought an archaic and sexist rule like the one being addressed would have been overturned a long time ago, but evidently that's wishful thinking in this country. Anyone who votes against this Bill is highly suspect, in my opinion.
As a woman, I feel like this bill has been a long time coming. I feel like only positives can come from this, and I'm glad that the younger generation will hopefully get to benefit from it.
As a woman. I would have given anything for this option while at primary school and secondary school, I would have felt so much more comfortable, not have had boys look up your skirts which I assure you every girl has had this happen and would have been more keen to do sports in shorts and not a PE skirt.
As it currently stands, girls have the right to request to wear trousers rather than a skirt. It is difficult for any school age child to make this request without feeling awkward or intimidated by either peers or school leadership. Having the inherent right to wear a form of leg covering is an incredibly beneficial and empowering step forward for girls which should be the norm
As I've said previously, this needs to happen. My daughter was a victim of up skirting in secondary school and has never worn a skirt since [REDACTED] because of the trauma it caused.
As male children are already allowed to wear trousers, we need to update these guidelines to include females to the modern day standard. This shouldn't even be an issue up for discussion in 2026.
As previously detailed ; more needs done about the relaxation of formal school uniforms in this country.
As previously mentioned, smart trousers, full length skirts and knee length skirts should be optional
As stated before this is long overdue!!!! Too long have women and girls been treated as second class citizens. Old fashioned men (particularly those who are meant to be religious) are taking advantage and making decisions on behalf of women and girls. Northern Ireland women and girls should have more choice and better protection.
As stated I think this Bill doesn't go far enough and any pupil should be allowed to wear any version of the uniform regardless of gender
As the mother of a girl in primary school, I think this bill is desperately needed. My daughter feels much more comfortable wearing trousers. They are more practical for activities, less restrictive and keep her warmer during the winter months. I find it concerning that there are currently no consistent rules or guidelines across all schools on whether girls can wear trousers. This means that my daughter's ability to wear something she feels comfortable in depends on the school she attends. My daughter should not have to feel uncomfortable in school because of her uniform, particularly when this could distract her from learning and participating fully in school activities. Boys are not subjected to the same restrictions. All children should have access to uniform options that allow them to feel comfortable, confident and able to focus on their education, regardless of gender.
As the parent of both a girl and a boy, I strongly support the aims of this bill to codify and protect girls' rights to dress comfortably and appropriately for their activities in school.
As well as the outcomes stated already, allowing girls to wear trousers challenges the everyday gender conditioning that teaches them from childhood that their bodies and appearance should conform to particular expectations simply because they are female Give girls greater autonomy and choice over their clothing, within a consistent school uniform framework. Equality.
At its core this is about equality and the non sexualisation and fetishising of schoolgirls. And in this world of ever-changing identities giving young people the space to be ambiguous, or just warm and comfortable, should be their right.
At the moment discretionary trouser policies help trans and lgbtq pupils who are willing to stick their heads above the parapet. As they are an exception to the main uniform policy. Making them a core part of uniform is an essential sort of along them common place amongst all girls not just trans and lgbtq girls and also ensuring there's no stigma to trousers. It's 2026. Why on earth are we debating young women being allowed to wear trousers instead of skirts? I was hired in the most progressive accountancy big four firm in 2001 and we were the first year not required to wear

skirts.. We're 25 years on and accountancy is supposed OT be conservative. Why are we doing this to our girls at school?

Bar the requirement for custom made uniforms, for example shirts or blazers with the logo embroidered on them. This is an incredibly unnecessary cost in the economical situation we are living in. Have a standard generic uniform set if there must be one to tailor to all needs

Branded sportswear should be prohibited in the new bill, The school should provide full kit for sports teams, not parents.

Children who are comfortable at school will be more relaxed which will support improved learning and general school experience. Clothing should not be the topic of conversation when discussing schools. We should be more focussed on giving our young people the skills to become confident, happy and capable adults.

CiNI welcomes the Bill as a modest but important measure to strengthen children's rights within school uniform policy. We particularly welcome that it is framed around choice and entitlement: it does not require pupils to wear trousers but removes the ability to deny them that option.

From a children's rights perspective, this is consistent with the UNCRC principles of non-discrimination (Article 2), best interests (Article 3), respect for children's views (Article 12), privacy and dignity (Article 16), and the right to education (Articles 28 and 29). School uniform forms part of children's everyday experience of education and can affect their comfort, dignity and participation.

The evidence gathered during development of the Bill is particularly important. Children and young people have described how compulsory skirts can affect menstruation, privacy, body confidence, freedom of movement and participation. Their experiences should be afforded significant weight when considering whether restricting this choice serves any sufficiently compelling purpose.

There is also relevant academic evidence. Reidy (2021), reviewing school uniform through a public-health lens in New Zealand, found that poorly designed uniform policies can have physical and psychological impacts, with girls among those disproportionately affected. Howard (2023), examining gendered school sports uniform in the UK, found that clothing requirements can influence girls' body confidence, comfort and participation in physical activity. Wolfe (2024), in a qualitative study in Australia, highlights an important implementation issue: trousers may technically be available to girls while continuing to be perceived as the 'boys' uniform'. This demonstrates the difference between formal permission and a genuinely accepted choice. Contemporary research reminds us that trouser choice is unable, by itself, to resolve wider inequalities or guarantee improvements in wellbeing, participation or period dignity. It does, however, support the broader argument that school clothing is not neutral in its effects and unnecessary restrictions can affect children negatively.

The Bill also provides an opportunity to reinforce the position that school uniforms should, first and foremost, be comfortable, affordable, practical and inclusive - with generic items widely available to drive down costs.

Finally, implementation will be critical. Clear guidance, effective communication and engagement with schools and uniform suppliers, accessible information for pupils and families, and ongoing monitoring will be necessary to identify any procedural, financial, cultural or attitudinal barriers.

The Bill's success should ultimately be judged not simply by whether trousers for all pupils appear in school policies, but by whether every child who wishes to exercise the right can do so freely, comfortably and affordably, without seeking special permission, having to justify their choice or experiencing stigma.

Comparatively with other nations, Northern Ireland is far behind on ensuring uniforms (that mark individual school identity and ensure 'uniformity') are gender sensitive.

Trousers are not binary pieces of clothes, but have been unnecessarily gendered particularly in northern Irish schools. Trousers as pieces of school uniform provide additional coverage in a temperate and colder climate and also offer the reassurance of dignity for pubescent young people. Especially for teenage girls who often wear under shorts to provide additional covering during menstruation and when experiencing growth in height.

The reform of school uniform policy and this bill offers the opportunity to ensure future children across the country can feel greater comfort in school clothing, without reprimand.

Completely behind this bill - shocked that it even requires this amount and level of input to be passed as it really should just be a straightforward decision but that's reflective of the world we live in

Could you people maybe do something about the cost of living ? Not to be woke or anything annoying but girls wearing trousers isn't a culture war issue that us'ns and them'ns should fight about. Let the kids wear the clothing they deem appropriate and maybe do something about the rising costs of bills, rent or the NHS you constantly cock up.

Can you not fuck with with the surgical operations at the Causeway Hospital ? Every time I interact with stormont politics it makes my hair fall out quicker than god had designed.

Equal rights.

Safety

Dignity

Comfort

Child protection

Warmth in winter months

Happiness

In how many professions when girls leave school or at uni are they forced to wear skirts - totally outdated uniform.

Even if I wasn't a father to two daughters I would feel it was ridiculous that politicians should be able to dictate to what girls are allowed to wear

Every child has the right to feel safe and comfortable at school. Every child has the right to have their dignity maintained. Every child has the right to a purposeful and inclusive educational environment, regardless of gender "norms".

Every girl should have the right to choose. As a parent of a neuro divergent girl, it is essential that she is comfortable in school to promote her learning.

Secondary school uniform also need to be changed blazers should not be an essential part of the school uniform and add extreme financial strain on families

Every girl should have the right to wear trousers. I have seen the positive impact it can have on the well-being of girls. This bill is much needed. It is a shame it has had to come to this.

Female pupils all wear shorts under their school skirts and pinafores because it gives them much needed confidence in the school environment and whilst going to and from their school. Being able to wear trousers will give them even more confidence

Female pupils should be heard. Upskirting is a serious danger to young girls. Feeling comfortable when on periods should be a basic human right. Who do school uniforms benefit? Let kids wear PE tracksuits to school. We no longer wear business attire in the work place except for meetings. Local councillors do not wear business attire at council meetings. Most public service jobs are through call centres and no longer front facing so staff can wear what they want. So why are we forcing children into uncomfortable uniforms?

Female students should have the option to choose whether they wear a skirt or trousers as part of their school uniform.

Females are entitled to choose a comfortable option for school the same as the males

Financially beneficial as many girls schools have specific skirts which can only be purchased from certain retailers. Girls should be allowed the comfort, freedom and autonomy to wear trousers if they wish. Equality should be across all age groups and genders.
For comfort and confidence I would have much preferred wearing trousers when I was at school. I can recall boys on the bus sitting to look up the girls skirts as they travelled to and from school.
For safeguarding and looking after young girls - every girl should be allowed to wear trousers in school if they wish to do so.
Gender equality is necessary for every pupil to achieve the best they can. Comfort is a matter of personal preference and one cannot forgot that each pupil is a person, with their own wants and needs. Not to be made tk wear anything they would not feel comfortable in
get it done
Get this implemented asap.
Girls and women can wear trousers in all other spaces, school should be the same. Respect is vital
Girls and young women have the right to dignity and comfort in schools. Wearing trousers or suitable bottoms gives support and comfort especially during periods. It baffles me that this even needs to discussed. On upskirting, schools need to work with parents and other educational organisations to educate young people.
Girls choosing to wear trousers for comfort, dignity and safety or any other reason that they may choose does not negatively impact how they learn. It does not take away their femininity. A mindset that a young girl should have to wear a skirt to school is beyond bizarre and potentially harmful. As a young girl I was harassed verbally numerous times on my journey home from school by older men, simply for wearing my school uniform. I still don't like wearing skirts and dresses in public to this day due to the comments made towards me as a child, and I do believe had we been able to wear trousers myself nor my friends wouldn't have had to endure what we did.
Girls deserve to feel comfortable, confident, and safe in school. When they don't, it directly affects their learning, their participation, and their wellbeing. Allowing girls to wear trousers as part of the standard school uniform is a simple, practical step that supports their safety, dignity, and ability to focus on education. Many girls feel uncomfortable or self-conscious in skirts, especially when they are required to wear tights. For some, this discomfort becomes a genuine barrier to learning. My [REDACTED] daughter experiences heavy periods, and on those days she feels extremely distracted and anxious when wearing a skirt. She worries about leaks, visibility, and whether her tights will hold up. This makes it harder for her to concentrate, participate fully, or feel confident in class. Trousers would provide her with far more security and peace of mind during heavy-flow days, allowing her to focus on her education rather than her clothing. My [REDACTED] and I am already anticipating extremely stressful mornings [REDACTED] if she is forced to wear tights. For children [REDACTED] tights can cause real distress and overwhelm throughout the school day. A uniform should never be a source of anxiety or discomfort. It should support children, not hinder them. In the current climate of concern about violence against women and girls, trousers offer a safer and more secure option. They allow girls to move freely, feel protected, and avoid the vulnerability that can come with wearing skirts in public spaces. There is also a practical issue with skirt length. Many girls wear skirts so short that they are not visible under their blazers, which looks inappropriate and undermines the intended uniform standard. Trousers provide a consistent, tidy, and respectful appearance without placing girls under pressure about skirt length or body image. Parents already face significant financial strain. Tights are expensive, tear easily, and need constant replacement — especially for active teenagers. Trousers are far more durable and cost-effective. Allowing girls to choose trousers reduces unnecessary spending and makes school uniform more affordable for families. This bill is not about removing choice, it is about adding a practical, comfortable, and safe option that reflects the needs of real girls in real schools. Trousers are already standard for boys; extending that option to girls is fair, sensible, and long overdue. I strongly support this bill because it prioritises girls' wellbeing, safety, dignity, and ability to learn. It recognises the realities faced by families and ensures that school uniform policies work for children, not against them.
Girls need this option. I was a pupil 20/30 years ago and wished at times I could wear trousers.

Girls need to be able to wear trousers for multiple reason,. To feel comfortable during periods. To feel safe around boys who could upskirt or pull the skirt up. To be warmer in cold weather. Some girls don't like showing their legs for various reasons so would help with self image. I can't understand why school pupils are forced to wear skirts , when in working life forcing a woman to wear a skirt would be considered unacceptable and sexist. Female teachers at these schools are allowed to wear trousers so it's a double standard.
Girls should be able to choose to wear trousers
Girls should be able to feel safe in their environment, wearing trousers can make them feel safer , and especially warmer in winter
Girls should be afforded dignity at school and the option to wear trousers as part of dignity in periods
Girls should be allowed to wear trousers if they want. It's shouldn't be debate. It's quite sexist to believe that skirts make a girl perform better .a comfortable child performs better.
Girls should be allowed to wear trousers without question
Girls should be allowed trousers. End off.
Girls should be given the choice if they'd like to wear a skirt or trousers. No politician or principal should dictate what girls can wear.
Girls should be permitted to wear trousers if they wish.
Girls should have a choice to wear trousers if they so wish. We are are supposed to be a progressive forward looking society, what kind of message does this being purposely left out of the previous legislation send our young people?
Girls should have a right to wear what they feel comfortable in. Winter time also they provide more warmth.
Girls should have the choice and given its 2026 is a disgrace that this bill is even needed
Girls should have the option to wear trousers for many reasons but personal safety and comfort resulting in confidence and reduced stress is huge.
Girls should not be restricted when it comes to their attire at school. They must always feel comfortable, particularly when they are menstruating. Trousers will also keep them warm during the colder months.
Girls should wear skirts this is a clear attempt to appease the Far Left and Muslims every pupil attending any school in the UK should wear the traditional uniform of their biological sex
Girls would have the option of wearing trousers of they so chose.
Give the young ladies the option as this affects them solely. I can hardly believe we are debating their rights in this day and age. It's sexism at its finest. Our young women deserve better from a so called progressive society
Great initiative which I would have welcomed when I was a student 30 years ago. It is time for our archaic politicians to move with the times and give girls the choice.
Growing up is hard! If girls feel more comfortable wearing trousers then I feel they should be allowed to do so. It should be their choice.
Hard to believe in this day and age this topic needs debate.
Having been a female at school, a teacher and now a parent of a daughter I think it should be the choice of the child wearing the uniform whether they wish to wear a skirt or trousers. Especially in primary school as my daughter needs to wear shorts under her pinafore just to be able to play without her pants showing. In secondary school when puberty hits it can be embarrassing having your legs on show with the new hair growing feeling pressure to shave. As an adult it is very rare I would wear a skirt and many women wear trousers every day. I agree that there are so many things for teenagers to worry about without wearing a skirt then having the additional costs of tights for winter months which rip and ladder.

Here is a more professional version of your statement:

Pupils should have the option of wearing trousers as part of the school uniform. In contemporary society, trousers are no longer regarded as exclusively male attire and are widely accepted as appropriate clothing for all genders.

Given the increasingly diverse and multicultural nature of society in Northern Ireland, it is important that school uniform policies are inclusive and accommodate cultural, religious, and personal preferences regarding dress. Providing the option of trousers or other suitable leg coverings would support greater inclusivity and ensure that all pupils feel comfortable and respected.

In addition, allowing pupils to wear trousers can help protect dignity and wellbeing, particularly during menstruation. For pupils who experience heavy periods, trousers may provide increased comfort, confidence, and reassurance during the school day. Offering this choice would support pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing while promoting a more inclusive and practical uniform policy.

Highly supportive of ensuring girls have the right to choose to wear trousers. This should extend to weather appropriate shorts for both boys and girls in hot weather.

how will this be policed?

my suspicion in my career was income from uniform was not always, shall we say, declared to DE.

However the country moves forward, the equality act should consider that boys should also be allowed to wear skirts by this standard. People should not be subject to judgement or critique no matter what they chose to wear no matter what environment they're in

Hurry up and wise up!

I actually can't believe that this having to be written into law in 2026. But I suppose better late than never!

I agree strongly that all pupils should have the choice to wear trousers to school

I also have a son in school. We have seen temperatures rising and they will continue to do so. During the summer months he is sweating all day. This means he is not concentrating properly, and gets dehydrated. Allowing him to wear appropriate clothing (shorts) will prevent these conditions.

I am strongly in favor of all pupils having the ability and choice to wear trousers. This will have positive impact on girls ability to focus on education.

I am strongly in support of this bill. I also feel strongly that children of all genders should be allowed to wear shorts, rather than trousers, if they wish to. Make school uniforms more appealing and inclusive to all children.

I applaud everyone supporting this bill to give our daughters equal rights.

I believe all children and young people should have the choice to wear the uniform option they feel most comfortable in. For example, pupils should be able to choose trousers or a skirt without restrictions based on gender. School uniform guidance should promote comfort, choice, inclusion and equality.

I believe it is a human right to enable all pupils (whether male, female or other), to be treated equitably when in a place which should provide the utmost comfort and suitability for learning. Female pupils wearing trousers should not be an issue creating serious division. Pupils should be empowered to make decisions, such as the choice of appropriate leg coverings. The very fact that this matter is causing uproar is a testament to the lack of priorities by this Department.

I believe it is particularly important for girls to wear trousers in school setting.

I believe it is right that girls have the right to choose to wear trousers just like female teachers can and any other female in a profession where it is essential to dress formally with a jacket and skirt or trousers! This will help girls in school to feel more comfortable during their day to day schooling all year through!

I believe it should go a step further and that the DE should be changing it to trousers across the board for ALL pupils and not have skirts as an option at all.

I believe that girls should have the option to wear trousers if they so wish. It is not compulsory for staff in the workplace, including teachers to wear a skirt. Therefore, I do not believe students should have to. I strongly believe that a uniform is an important part of preparing students for the world of work and promotes equality. However, no uniform should be a barrier to education. Transgender students are extremely uncomfortable in a skirt, and the option of wearing trousers means they do not have to argue against school policy or be different from their classmates. To develop a bill regarding uniform, but not include this amendment, is not seizing an opportunity to help our students.
I believe that in 2026 girls should have the right and choice to wear trousers, it should be a personal choice and not be dictated by men in government. Some girls feel very vulnerable wearing skirts and with the rise of up-skirting on social media and sexual harassment girls face on a daily basis it is a lot safer to wear trousers and the practical side of being warmer in winter months. All girls should have a say in the clothes they wear and what they are comfortable with!
I believe this bill is a large step in the right way towards gender equality in schools along with making students feel more comfortable and safe. As a victim of upskirting, I believe allowing pupils to wear trousers is helpful for safeguarding. I believe there is still more progress to make such as allowing more self expression and promoting more individualism within schools but this bill is an amazing way to start breaking the mold that our schools are still under.
I believe this Bill should be progressed. Girls should have the right to choose to wear trousers as part of their school uniform, regardless of the school they attend. The current situation raises significant concerns regarding equality, inclusion, and discrimination. Continuing to adhere to antiquated practices is not acceptable. Restrictive uniform policies can undermine girls' dignity, comfort, and wellbeing, while also creating safeguarding concerns. For example, requiring skirts may increase vulnerability to incidents such as upskirting. Allowing girls the option to wear trousers is a practical measure that can help promote both safety and personal dignity. All children should have equal rights to access education and participate fully in school life in a way that is safe, comfortable, and respectful of their individual needs. Providing girls with the choice to wear trousers is a simple yet important step towards ensuring equality, supporting wellbeing, and fostering an inclusive educational environment.
I can't believe this even has to be a bill!!!! Let girls wear trousers. It's 2026!!!!
I don't think most adults realise that schools can still ban girls from wearing trousers. Like most people I thought that level of institutional sexism had long disappeared. I would hope that the Committee will now examine what other stereotypes and manifestations of the patriarchy remain embedded in our educational system. Also, how has this thing survived the equality legislation and s75?
I don't understand why this has taken so long for this issue to be raised. Women have been allowed to wear trousers to work for decades. I don't understand why refusing to allow girls to wear trousers to school isn't already covered by existing discrimination laws.
I fail to see how anyone could object to this bill. The sooner it comes into effect the better for all girls and young women. They should have a choice of skirt or trousers.
I fear that we have an Education Minister who is applying his own personal idealology to decisions of his Department. This is a perfect example .
I feel disgraced and ashamed to come from a country that has not yet made it possible for all girls in school to be able to wear trousers. I remember when I was in high school, I was extremely uncomfortable every single day having to wear a skirt. I didnt feel protected at all. Its been 10 years and still girls arent being given the option. Why not, other than sexism and a hatred towards young girls? Being forced to wear a skirt to school that I hated felt like humiliation each day. I dont want any more girls in this country going through those same feelings when it can be prevented
I feel that girls should be given the same opportunities as boys . Free from fear of up skirting , freedom of movement in sports etc .
I feel this is so important for all our young ladies going through school. I wish I could have worn trousers during school years for all the reasons listed.
I find it preposterous that this is even a topic for discussion. Why must there be a discussion on the clothing of female children in 2026? It should simply be a stated fact that all school children should be allowed to wear the full scope of the uniform available.

I fully support girls right to wear trousers. It is particularly unpleasant to see male politicians try to block this. No one is stopping girls from wearing skirts if they wish. Can we also do more about branded school wear. No more than one or two items should be branded.

I fully support this bill but feel it should not be needed as the education minister should have already addressed it

I fully support this bill. I have 2 young daughters and would hope that by the time they need to worry about periods, they will be allowed to wear trousers to school ensuring they feel more comfortable and confident every month.

I fully support this proposed Bill. Allowing girls of school age to wear trousers as part of their school uniform is a sensible and long-overdue change.

For many girls, especially those experiencing their first periods, wearing a skirt can cause unnecessary anxiety about leaks or stains being visible. Having the option to wear trousers can help them feel more comfortable, confident and able to focus on their education rather than worrying about embarrassment.

Schools in England have already moved towards more flexible uniform policies, so it's about time Northern Ireland caught up. This isn't about forcing anyone to wear trousers—it's about giving girls a choice that better meets their needs. A simple change like this can make a real difference to pupils' wellbeing and dignity.

I had and still have awful, very heavy and accident prone periods. Skirts make this so much more difficult and trousers would have made life so much easier as an anxious teenager.

Include the trousers clause in the bill and make life easier for people with periods.

I had the option to wear trousers to an all-girls school from [REDACTED] where I went to school in [REDACTED]

Sometimes I wore skirts, but often trousers were more comfortable. Some girls wore skirts daily, some girls only trousers. The impact on learning was ZERO.

When it was cold, we could still be comfortable outside, when we were in summer, especially in warm exam season, we could wear skirts.

The ask here isn't for exclusivity of trousers over skirts, simply the allowance for girls (in 2026 mind you) to have autonomy and choose how they feel comfortable going to school. Some of the most girly-girls I knew wore only trousers.

I work extremely closely and travel with senior leadership for a global company, with offices based in both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Most women in these leadership positions wear trousers. There is no impact on employability, this is no longer reflecting clothing in the workplace. Indeed, our politicians here in Stormont get to choose if they want to wear skirts, dresses, or trousers.

There is no basis whatsoever for schools to have such a strict uniform policy for girls only. We live in Northern Ireland where it is cold and rainy most of the school term, our uniforms should reflect this.

I have 2 young girls and I want them to have the freedom of choice if they wear trousers, my eldest is 8 and she feels she can't play and practice her handstands during playtime in school, during the colder mornings she has said she is cold in her skirt, as her parent I have said I allow her to wear trousers and I will speak to the teachers but she was worried she would get in trouble with her teachers. She does like to wear her skirt in school but there has been times she has asked me why when she is going on a school trip why she can't just wear her trousers and to be honest I don't have a reasonable answer for her. I want her to be allowed to wear trousers when she wants to and for her to have that control over how she presents and feels comfortable in her body. Uniforms can be and are great and have their place but this need for a girl to wear a skirt I can't see how it stands up to reason in 2026. I'm disappointed that this bill needs to be brought forward and this issue should have been handled in the DE bill on uniforms. Thank you for bringing this bill forward

I have 3 daughters. In primary school 1 child moved to a different school where trousers weren't allowed yet she tried to play football every day in playground.
My second daughter wore trousers for 2 years and then chose to wear a skirt. It should be the child's choice what they wear, some schools are forward thinking enough to not make a big deal of this!
None of my 3 wanted to wear trousers in 'big' school but i know if it had been an option for me, I certainly would have chosen to wear them. Instead I was always in trouble for wearing my PE kit!

There are several strong reasons why girls should be allowed to wear trousers to school:

1. Comfort – Trousers are often more comfortable, especially during cold or wet weather, and allow students to move around more easily.
2. Practicality – They are better suited for activities such as PE, science experiments, climbing stairs, sitting on the floor, or playing during break times.
3. Equality– Allowing girls to choose trousers gives them the same clothing options as boys, promoting fairness and reducing gender stereotypes.
4. Confidence– Some girls feel more confident and less self-conscious wearing trousers, which can help them focus on learning rather than worrying about their clothing.
5. Weather protection– In winter, trousers provide extra warmth and protection from rain and wind.
6. Health and safety– Trousers can help protect legs from scrapes during practical activities and may be more suitable for cycling or walking to school.

A balanced conclusion could be:

> Girls should be allowed to wear trousers to school because they are comfortable, practical, and promote equality. Giving students a choice helps them feel confident and ready to learn while ensuring school uniforms are suitable for all weather, activities, and individual needs.

I have been a pupil at a school where skirts were mandatory and it had negative impacts on my self confidence, my ability to learn and my mental health because I suffered from [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] This was an awful time for me and I'm determined that my own daughter should never feel that way about herself and should have the option of wearing trousers to mitigate the issues that come from being forced to only wear skirts.

I have daughters and one of which who hates wearing skirts and preferred to wear shorts/trousers and i think this has a knock on effect to there confidence and they dont feel comfortable

I have nothing but bad memories of shivering in class wearing a short flimsy grey skirt. This was [REDACTED] in the 1970s. Imagine my horror on seeing, on an October day a couple of years ago, in Home Bargains, an equally cold-looking [REDACTED] schoolgirl. Any Head who still insists on girls wearing skirts should be forced to explain him/herself as to why!

I have two girls, the oldest commencing secondary education in September. My daughter attended a local primary school that allowed leggings/joggers, having to wear a skirt is one of the aspects she finds most daunting regarding secondary education. Also, this survey should be applicable to girls and women only, it has no impact on men or boys therefore they shouldn't get a vote.

In NI we have an epidemic of male violence against women/girls, let's give girls the right to be comfortable, feel safer and ultimately more confident to deal with the actual issues and hard challenges in life that they will encounter. Let's stop giving males a right or say over women/girls bodies, clothing or choices.

I hope that no school will be able to claim an exemption to these new uniform guidelines for any spurious religious or other made up reasons which seek to maintain control of what girls wear and over their bodies

I hope that no school will be allowed an exemption from these new school uniform guidelines on any religious or other spurious grounds.

I hope this also means PE uniform also. Giving everyone the same safety and choices around what makes them comfortable and secure will help take some of the risks of being a woman in a mans world away. This will hopefully help raise a new generation of kids for the future who understand the needs of other genders (not just of men) and give them the respect they deserve.
I hope this bill is passed and that common sense prevails.
I hope this bill is passed and the antiquated notion of girls wearing skirts at school is at last finished
I just find it a really outdated way of thinking. You rarely see girls wearing skirts and dresses these days in general, with girls opting for more comfortable clothing such as shorts and trousers. It should transcend into their uniforms where they spend most of the week wearing them.
I remember my class being scolded by senior teaching staff, 10 years ago when I was attending an all girls grammar school, that we must sit with our legs crossed when we are in a male teachers class. I was shocked then and I'm shocked it still hasn't changed now. Why must a whole class of children have to change their comfort and behaviour in order for an adult male teacher to feel comfortable? It is madness.
I sincerely hope that this Bill will impact upon all schools, including fee-paying grammar schools and independents - it shouldn't act as yet another visible distinction between grammar and secondary pupils.
I strongly believe there can only be positive outcomes from this Bill being passed. I hope that in time there is further discussion for changes to be made for the rest of the uniform: buttoned shirts, ties and blazers as well as branded uniforms with exclusive stockists, leading us to a more diverse and comfortable schooling experience for our children. School is for learning, that should always be at the core. What we wear is secondary. Happy, comfortable, supported children will hopefully lead to better educated, more confident young people and i personally hope, a reduction in mental health numbers of children and young people.
I strongly believe this bill is necessary. Younger year children who still very much enjoy energetic imaginative play need to be able to do so freely without risk of exposure or skirts getting in the way. Older year children need to be able to make a choice that is based on their own comfort. Children are human beings....not dolls....they can make choices.
I strongly support the right of all women and girls to wear trousers if they wish. It is shameful that we are living in 2026 and we still do not have this choice.
I strongly support this Bill and believe it is long overdue. I protested at my own school in 2001 for the right to wear trousers, so I find it genuinely astonishing that, 25 years later, schoolgirls are still having to campaign for the same basic choice. This is not simply a question of uniform or personal preference. It is about equality, dignity, comfort and safeguarding. Girls should not be placed in clothing that makes them feel exposed or vulnerable, nor should they be expected to accept restrictions that would be considered unreasonable if imposed on boys. There are also important safeguarding considerations. Practical uniform choices can help reduce opportunities for unwanted photographs, upskirting, sexual harassment and other inappropriate behaviour. More importantly, the responsibility for preventing such behaviour must always remain with those who perpetrate it, not with girls and what they are wearing. I hope the Bill will also encourage schools to listen more seriously to pupils about policies that directly affect them. Children and young people should have a voice in decisions concerning their daily lives, particularly where those decisions affect their dignity, comfort and ability to participate confidently in education. It is disappointing that this issue remains necessary in 2026. I hope this Bill finally brings an end to an outdated inequality and establishes the principle that girls should have the same practical choices as boys in school uniform.
I support giving girls the option to wear trousers if they wish. What I struggle to understand is why Stormont has spent around two years discussing what is, in reality, a straightforward uniform policy change, with updated guidance not expected until August 2027. At a time when our education system faces far more pressing challenges, it is difficult to understand why such a simple issue has required such a lengthy legislative process. It feels as though this could have been resolved much sooner through updated guidance while still allowing schools, parents and pupils to have their say.

I support the Bill and its aim of ensuring that school uniform policies are fair, inclusive and appropriate for children and young people in Northern Ireland.

It is 2026, not 1926, and I do not believe schools should be unnecessarily gendering clothing or placing restrictions on pupils based on whether an item of clothing is traditionally considered "for boys" or "for girls". Uniform requirements should be practical, reasonable and applied equally to all pupils.

I particularly support the requirement for the Department of Education to update its existing school uniform guidance. It is important that schools are given clear, consistent guidance so that the new legislation is implemented properly and pupils and parents are not left dealing with different interpretations from one school to another.

I also agree that the financial effects of the Bill are likely to be minimal. In fact, clear legislation and guidance could reduce complaints and disputes by removing unnecessary ambiguity.

Overall, I support the Bill and believe it is a sensible and overdue step towards ensuring that school uniform policies reflect modern society, respect pupils' rights and avoid unnecessary gender-based restrictions.

I support this bill wholeheartedly.

I think choice is very important. Girl should be encouraged to make the decision for themselves. In the current climate it is an essential choice

I think girls should be able to have a choice to have trousers as apart of the school uniform

I think it is ridiculous that it has come to this and that money is being spent debating this.

I think it is shocking that it is 2026 and we behave like we are in 1926. Girls should be freely permitted to wear trousers if they see fit without having to challenge anyone about it.

I think it should be totally illegal to enforce any kind of gender-segregated school uniform, including requiring different colours/etc for girls and boys. It will inevitably single out transgender students and put financial pressure on parents with children of different genders.

I think its absolutely wild that this type of discussion needs to go through such process. I believe that wearing trousers and/or skirts should be decided by an individual, so long as they are recognised as part of the school uniform. It is surprising that in 2026 that this requires such debate or regulation to this end. School uniform policies should provide reasonable choice and should not restrict an individual to a particular garment on the basis of gender - skirts for girls and trouser for boys is a long gone rule and I think that belief is far behind us.

School is often the first significant social environments children experience independently of their parents and family, where they begin to establish their own friendships, relationships and sense of belonging. Ensuring each feels safe, secure and comfortable within that environment is important. If having reasonable choice over which approved uniform garments they wear contributes to that sense of comfort, i see no reasonable restriction.

I think should be pushed through sooner rather than later.

I think that it is sad that it has required a separate uniform bill to enable girls to be able to wear trousers if they want to, it's 2026!

I think that the option to wear trousers for all genders ia an excellent advantage all round! It would really help with confidence for alot of girls who may not feel comfortable in a skirt esp at winter times or those who feel self conscious etc.

I think the bill is long overdue

I think THE ONLY reason should be equality, the other points are superfluous. But if it helps get it over the line why not this reasons as well, periods, dignity, feel comfortable... It should be simply just equal.

I think there should be allowed to wear trousers if the pupils want

I think this amendment is long overdue for female pupils- promotes equality and recognises the need for choice, improvement and safeguards female wellbeing and health issues

I think this bill is a great thing. As a young woman in school I would have loved to be able to wear trousers.

I hit puberty very young (aged 9) and after my body changed visibly, I felt overly sexualised and deeply uncomfortable wearing the school uniform with a skirt. I felt like (and I was legally) a child, but I looked like an adult in a child's uniform. Something which male strangers and my male peers at school felt very happy to share with me openly. I was openly sexualised by others regularly and this impacted my self esteem and how I felt about my body. This discomfort lasted into my adulthood too.

This understandably made a significant impact on how I felt in my uniform and I would have much preferred to have been able to wear trousers as part of the uniform. I would have looked less like a fetishised "school girl" and more like a teenager in an appropriate looking uniform.

My gender identity has always aligned with my biological sex at birth, so I never experienced feeling uncomfortable due to gender norms and expectations. But I can empathise with how difficult this experience must be. I hope that allowing young people to wear trousers will help in this regard too.

Frankly, this legislation is late in its arrival. But I am glad it is here, even if I could not benefit from it myself.

I think this bill is long overdue and I fully support girls being able to wear trousers to school as well as leg covers for PE etc. As a mother of a tall teenage daughter who was shamed at school for what teachers deemed a short 'inappropriate' length skirt I would have really appreciated this uniform choice being an option, as would my daughter have

I think this bill is really important if we intend to teach children about diversity and respect.

I think this is a fantastic bill and should have been implemented decades ago. Forcing young girls to wear skirts provides no benefit and is often a distraction from their education, whether through simply being cold in winter to concerns about up-skirting. All students should have the choice to wear a uniform that they feels comfortable in regardless of their gender.

I think this is great and will genuinely improve the wellbeing of many students across the country. Though i do believe this should have happened much earlier.

I think this is really important if we really want young girls to feel equal with their male peers and feel like they can be comfortable in school.

I totally agree that girls should have the freedom of choice but it should not be wrapped up in anything other than this- all this stuff about cost, dignity and ability to work freely is just waffle.

I welcome and support the proposed legislation that would require all schools in Northern Ireland to permit pupils to wear trousers as part of their school uniform.

This proposal represents a practical, inclusive, and equitable measure that recognises the diverse needs and preferences of pupils and their families. Allowing all pupils the option to wear trousers promotes choice and dignity while ensuring that school uniform policies do not unnecessarily restrict participation or create barriers to education.

Many pupils find trousers to be more comfortable, practical, and suitable for daily school activities, particularly during colder weather, and travel to and from school. The availability of trousers can also support the wellbeing of pupils with disabilities, medical conditions, sensory sensitivities, or cultural and religious considerations.

This proposal also aligns with principles of equality and non-discrimination by ensuring that uniform policies are not based on outdated gender stereotypes. Providing a choice of approved uniform options allows schools to maintain high standards of dress and presentation while respecting the individual needs and preferences of pupils.

I therefore support the introduction of a statutory requirement ensuring that all pupils have the option to wear trousers as part of their school uniform and encourage policymakers to progress this legislation as a positive step towards greater equality and inclusivity in Northern Ireland's schools.

I will be delighted for this bill to pass.

I wonder what message this sends the younger generations of girls ... that we have to legislate their right to wear trousers, albeit a good thing to address a current problem. I hope its done in such a way that schools cannot ignore/over ride it.
I wore trousers at an all girls grammar school in England in the 70s. It is ridiculous that nearly 50 years later girls are not comfortable in school uniforms, and so little thought has gone into their comfort and safety. This is well overdue.
I would be in favour of a much more basic school uniform, or for children to wear their own clothes, as in many parts of Europe, Scandinavia- it doesn't appear to have any detrimental effect on the children's learning. It would indeed be very beneficial to many children who are simply uncomfortable in an old fashioned and restrictive uniform. Many adults wear more relaxed clothing every day, eg, nurses have moved on from starched dresses, aprons, and frankly ridiculous headgear to much more comfortable trousers and tunics (with optional cultural head coverings if desired).
I would have to question the rationale behind any school forcing female students to wear skirts, given that women have been wearing trousers in the workplace for many decades.
Female pupils must be allowed to choose to cover their legs like boys.
Why should girls/women be forced to make a feature of a part of their bodies that, for a myriad of reasons, they may not want to draw any attention to?
In my opinion, there is absolutely no justification for making female pupils wear skirts other than antiquated sexism masquerading as "tradition".
I would like to see uniforms plain and sustainably sourced with children's movement and comfort prioritised.
If a workplace mandated women wearing skirts and didnt provide a trouser option there would be outrage. Our girls deserve better.
If girls are uncomfortable in class for any reason (menstruation, being cold, having leering eyes on them) with being FORCED to wear skirts, then they are likely to disengage with lessons, fall behind and be labelled difficult. This is unfair and should not be tolerated.
If you want to keep women in their place, ban them from practical clothing. If you want them to succeed to the best of their abilities, allow them to participate fully in school, no longer required to be kept vulnerable by impractical clothing.
I'm in agreement that trousers should be optional for all post primary and primary school children, across the province regardless of tradition or tidiness standards. There is no reason to insist that young girls wear skirts just because it has always been done that way. I can think of absolutely no reason to insist on skirts - it's archaic and strange. This is an easy step for DE to take to ensure more inclusive and comfortable learning environments for all.
I'm just grateful that it's finally happening, if it does :) I remember seeing a news article about a boy who wore a skirt for his exams due to the heat and I think that's brilliant. And the way the seats are spread out in such a setting would negate any attention, plus there's a test going on anyway. It helps all of us.
I'm surprised that this was not already normalised in uniform policy across NI, considering that in England, all pupils have had the option to wear trousers for years.
In a context where sex identity is fluid the rigid establishment of dress codes bade on perceived gender should be abolished
In a country where it has been deemed the most dangerous for a girl to live we need to implement as many changes as possible to provide girls as equals to boys. The upskirting would be completely removed if trousers can be worn The cost will be on par with replacing tights on a monthly basis The comfort for a young girl beginning her periods will help ease anxiety on bleeding out onto clothes as a young girl who suffered horrendous heavy periods I was off school each month due to excess bleeding which shirts provided no security to help catch the blood a few occasions I had to clean my legs on the bathrooms due to blood running down them the embarrassment and shame of this still haunts me today
In all aspects of life girls and women choose to wear trousers and this should be an option for school also. It is outdated to have skirts only and shouldn't we help children feel more comfortable at school which should benefit their learning. Having the option to wear a skirt means girls have choice.

In my previous role as a part time lecturer, I quite frankly could not give less of a fuck what children were wearing. I don't care if boys wanted to come in wearing dresses and girls wanted to come in wearing combat trousers and a flak vest. As long as they were comfortable as to not disrupt their own learning, I couldn't care less what they wore.

As previously said, anyone wanting to mandate that schoolgirls must wear a skirt is a pedophile. There's no other reason as to why you would want such a thing to be a requirement.

In terms of pupils with health issues, in my experience schools do not consider trousers a reasonable adjustment and would not permit female pupils to wear them for those reasons. This would greatly help female students experiencing health issues.

For the financial impact on families, I have experienced schools dictating precisely which skirts students have to buy, which come at a greater cost (around £30-40 per skirt in my experience) whereas male students were simply told a colour and fit of trousers, which had much more availability across suppliers and they could access for around £12 a pair.

Having only the option of a singular expensive skirt meant students often didn't have a spare so if they damaged it beyond repair at any point during the school day, it was always a rush to get a new one for the next day to meet the uniform requirements, and an additional unexpected financial burden.

In the climate where violence against women and girls is so prevalent I feel it is ridiculous that girls are not permitted to wear trousers to school. The over sexualisation of children starts young and has dire consequences for women and girls

In this day and age this shouldn't even be an issue. The education minister is very out of touch with the real world. In my opinion.

International human rights standards underscore the principle of non-discrimination. Prohibiting girls from wearing trousers in school is a discriminatory practice that violates the principles of gender equality and the rights of women and girls. A number of international human rights standards apply in support of the right of girls to wear trousers in school including:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW contains a number of articles which support the right to wear trousers in school:
 - o Article 1 Definition of Discrimination - defines discrimination against women as any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex that hinders the recognition of women's rights. This would include anything that restricts clothing choices based on gender which can be viewed as a form of gender-based discrimination.
 - o Article 2 Measures – obligates states to eliminate discrimination and take appropriate steps to ensure equality in all areas including in education.
 - o Article 5 Stereotypes – CEDAW calls for the modification of social and cultural patterns that perpetuate discrimination. Enforcing traditional gender norms around clothing can perpetuate harmful stereotypes.
 - o Article 10 Education - CEDAW emphasises the need for equal access to education and the importance of removing obstacles to educational attainment for girls. Enforcing uniform policy that limits the clothing choices of girls, including prohibiting trousers, may hinder their comfort and participation in educational environments.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Article 2 includes the right of children to be free from discrimination and Article 12 includes the right of children to express themselves. Restricting the ability of girls to wear trousers in school can be seen as a breach of their right to express themselves and their gender identity.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 19 ensures the right to freedom of expression and Article 26 prohibits discrimination on various grounds including sex. The right to wear trousers in school should be protected as it can be viewed as an expression of identity.
- European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The ECHR is incorporated into domestic law through the Human Rights Act 1998. Article 8 guarantees the right to respect for private and family life and Protocol No. 12 prohibits discrimination on any ground including sex. These rights may be violated by dress codes that enforce gender-specific clothing.

It beggars belief that in 2026 adults still have the right to tell children they must wear things that make them more vulnerable and less able to engage fully in an educational environment

It could help save families money as keeping girls in tights can be expensive

It feels so sexist and discriminatory for pupils to have their preferred leg coverings policed by gender norms and tradition, especially when they don't choose to dress that way at home.
It is 2026, not the 1950s. I find it incredibly outdated that some schools still dictate that girls must wear skirts or kilts while trousers are reserved for boys.
Children should be comfortable, warm and able to move freely throughout their school day. This is particularly important in primary school, where children spend time sitting on floors, playing, running and taking part in outdoor activities. It is also especially important for neurodivergent children and those with sensory needs, for whom clothing is not simply a matter of preference but can have a significant impact on their comfort and ability to regulate and learn.
Girls who want to wear them should absolutely be able to do so. The issue is choice. A child should not be denied an otherwise perfectly acceptable item of school uniform solely because of whether they are a boy or a girl.
School should be preparing children for the world they are growing up in, not preserving gender rules from generations ago. Allowing every pupil the same uniform options is such a simple, practical change, and I find it difficult to understand why it is even necessary to legislate for something that should already be common sense.
It is a disgrace that this has had to be addressed as an amendment- it should have been a feature of the original bill. The amount of money wasted. I am hopeful the common sense will prevail and this amendment will go through and allow girls to be protected.
It is a failing that this has taken so long. Girls deserve to be able to wear trousers while learning at school. It will have so many positive outcomes vs girls being forced to wear skirts which can have so many negative consequences
It is a pity that it has taken so long and been such a struggle to achieve this very basic right for girls to be permitted to wear trousers.
This is akin to the ridiculous situation on schoolchildren not wearing appropriate clothing in winter.
It is absolutely ridiculous in 2026 that a Bill has to be brought forward in order for a decision to be made on this subject.
Anyone with any common sense will say that of course all pupils should be allowed to wear trousers as part of their uniform.
This is infuriating to say the least, what an utter waste of time and resources because one man (Paul Givan) can't move into the 21st century.
It is my opinion that nobody will be any worse off if this Bill is passed. Thousands of Northern Irish girls will benefit from having the option to wear trousers to school, be that when they have their period, when temperatures drop and they have to stand waiting for buses, or all year round.
The fact that this is not already an option for all students is mind boggling and just goes to show how out of touch our elected officials really are.
It is absurd it has taken to this point for an amendment like this to be addressed. It is within the DE minister's powers to have passed this sooner so delaying it further is unacceptable from the minister
It is an uncontroversial position in my view, that girls should have the option to wear skirts or trousers to school. Frankly, I can see no reason why this restriction should remain in place.
It is anachronistic to insist on girls wearing skirts. I cannot think of a single profession where females have to wear a skirts. Imagine, for example if nurses had to go back to dresses. There would be an outcry. Many girls will choose to wear a skirt but the choice to wear trousers should be available to them
It is beyond belief that girls are not permitted to wear trousers to school. The year is 2026. Let's act like it.
It is clear gender discrimination to not allow girls to wear trousers as part of their school uniform. Absolute common sense would be that all pupils regardless of gender can wear trousers to school if that is where they are more comfortable

It is common sense and it should be passed
It is concerning that it would take bill for children in 2026 to be allowed the option of wearing trousers. Our work on the cost of the whole school day highlights multiple issues that we feel should be addressed. Too much time and emphasis is spent on what amounts to the policing of young people and particularly girls and young womens bodies. While it is appreciated the bill will help girls feel more comfortable we would also like to see dedicated work in the assembly on womens health and particularly around issues such as endometriosis which affects a lot of young women and impacts negatively on their attendance and attainment. With schools in deficit, families struggling with cost of living, rising absenteeism in children with additional needs, the issue of trousers really is simple and common sense. We would have preferred the uniform act to have gone further in requiring schools to simplify items but also provide more comfortable items across the board. There is a conservatism within our schools around how young people look and dress which is not replicated across the employment sectors. The onus must be on improving school environments, including cost of the school day overall, so all children can feel included, welcome and comfortable.
It is crazy that this is skill a topic being discussed. Uniforms should be non gendered and should be comfortable for all pupils who attend.
It is disgraceful in the year of 2026 that this even has to be an issue. It is something I have been talking about, due to girls having periods, as a primary school teacher, ever since I have moved back to Northern Ireland. This is a non starter in England- from reception age, children are allowed to wear trousers. How prehistoric is this country?
It is disgraceful that legislation like this is needed at all. The fact that anyone would seek to prevent girls from wearing trousers to school is both regressive and misogynistic.
Girls wear trousers for many valid reasons. For some, they provide greater comfort and confidence during menstruation, helping them manage periods without unnecessary anxiety or embarrassment. Others have sensory processing difficulties, disabilities, or medical conditions that make skirts, tights, or certain uniform items uncomfortable or distressing. Every pupil should be able to learn in an environment where their wellbeing and dignity are respected.
School uniform policies should reflect equality, inclusion, and common sense—not outdated stereotypes about what girls should wear. No child should have their education negatively affected because they are denied a practical uniform option.
I support this bill because it protects the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of girls. It should never have been necessary to legislate for something so basic, but given that some have sought to restrict this choice, these protections are both justified and important.
It is every girls right to feel comfortable, especially when in a place of education. Schools are sometimes more worried about how well the child is dressed, rather than what they are learning.
It is extremely concerning that some people want to insist on little girls showing their legs. It is predatory and discriminatory conduct. I am horrified it has taken and continues to take so much work, time, debate and argument to allow children to wear trousers. I firmly believe anyone wanting little girls in skirts is a predator. Forcing little girls to show their legs due to adult wants teaches those girls that adults are allowed to force them to comply with being insecure and uncomfortable just to please adults. Very dangerous, especially in today's climate of VAWG and femicide. My daughter has always worn trousers to school and will continue to. If this becomes an issue, her bodily autonomy will always come first and she will be removed from the education system. I will never teach my daughter that she must show her body to please anyone or have access to anything, education or otherwise.
It is fair that girls are given a choice.
It is hard to believe that in the year 2026 we are debating whether or not we will allow a section of society (who lets face it have never had autonomy or rights over their own bodies) to wear extra scraps of clothing on their lower legs. This should be automatic and not up for debate. This should not even be being discussed. The fact that men are involved in discussing this is outrageous. Our body our choice now and always!
It is imperative that all school children can wear what they feel most comfortable in in order to be able to complete their academic studies. There is no reason girls should be forced to wear skirts and shorts/other recreational wear that is not trousers when their male counterparts already have this freedom. I strongly support the freedom for girls to be able to wear trousers in all aspects of school life!

It is imperative that young girls are given the choice to wear trousers for their psychological well being. As a professional who specialises in children and young people's mental health this will be linked to issues re body confidence, ease possible trauma responses and anxiety that young girls may face
It is important for children and young people to be allowed to choose to wear trousers, skirts, other leg coverings as they prefer. This is a positive ammendment to support those wishing to do so.
It is insanity that this is even required in the year 2026.
It is long past time to stop forcing girls to wear skirts. For those that want to, of course they can choose to. But the requirement is ludicrous. It has always been ludicrous but we have an opportunity now to act. Take it.
It is madness this is even being debated in 2026, it sounds more like 1926. Women should be allowed to wear trousers if they want to. Girls wear trousers in school in England and there are no negative effects from this
It is more than time that girls were legally allowed to wear trousers as part of their primary and secondary school uniform, should they choose to, as they do in the rest of their normal lives. With the current commitment to providing dignity and protecion to women and girls, it is unacceptable for girls to feel uncomfortable, exposed and at times unsafe at school due to outdated and indefensible school uniform 'rules' which have nothing to do with their education or learning. Girls should be entitled to feel comfortable in their school uniform and be able to participate freely and with confidence in classroom, playground and physical activities. Adolescent girls in particular already have significant bodily changes and functions to deal with, which the entitlement to wear trousers would help them to manage. Children and young people attend school for a minimum of 12 years; there is no reason that only boys are allowed to dress in comfortable, warm, weather appropriate clothing just becasuse they are boys. I fully support neutrality, inclusivity, and particularly equality in school uniform policies and I wish that this Bill had been enacted while my own children were at school.
It is not only prehistoric to expect girls to wear skirts every day it is arguably dangerous. With the current climate of our country, the amount of violent crimes against young girls and the rise of far right extremism in young boys the government should be doing everything in their power to avoid unnecessary hostility between children. Young girls have said they want to wear trousers why is that not enough? Why must young girls be forced to experience sexual harassment through up skirting when there are ample other clothing options available. Very few, if any, work place would force a woman to wear a skirt why should children be forced to wear an item of clothing they find uncomfortable. Why is Paul Givan more concerned about little girls legs not being on shown than he is about thousands of children being shot to death by the Israeli army?
It is odd that mostly male civil servants are obsessed with clothing worn by teenage girls. Waste of time and resources. Please get this finalised and move focus to real issues.
It is only right in this day and age that this should be made standard in all schools and decisions on this should have been made years ago to give girls the right to choose whatever they want to wear for comfort
It is outrageous that in 2026 that this is even necessary. The school uniforms bill should have allowed for girls to wear trousers in the first place. When I was at school, I was diagnosed with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] This required bandages and treatments that were visible to all. I would have loved to have had the choice to wear trousers at this difficult time.
It is outrageous that old pervy men in the DUP have been able to force young girls to not be allowed to cover themselves in schools despite decades of teachers being inappropriate. They should have no say in what young girls are wearing.
It is rediculous that this bill is required in this day and age. Of course girls should be allowed to wear trousers. Of course they should be able to feel comfortable and discrete whilst they have periods. Why is this so difficult
It is ridiculous that a bill is required to ensure females get equality. This should just be common sense.

It is ridiculous that in this day and age that this legislation couldn't be included in the Education Minister's uniform policy.
It is ridiculous that this is even an issue, school is the only environment wher girls are expected to dress in skirts!
It is ridiculous we make children wear blazers, shorts, ties and force girls to wear skirts when most of the adult workforce book longer do. It's a left over from Victorian times and needs to go
But 100% sorry there being uniforms. Just less restrictive and allow more individuality
It is sad that such a bill is necessary and that so many schools have been unable to come to this position on their own. It is staggering that in 2026, there is such a lack of modern thinking among so many school governing bodies. I cannot think of any downside to giving girls the right to wear trousers to school.
It is so important to allow this. As a teacher and a female, I wear trousers 90% of the time.... For comfort, warmth, convenience, and other reasons .
It is the 21st century
It is the 21st century girls should have the right to wear trousers.
It is very good that this is being brought in now, but it is extremely late in the day, it should have been brought in years ago.
It makes me so sad to think of my daughter experiencing the harassment myself and so many of my peers did throughout our highschool years in our skirts both in school and travelling to and from, from fellow students and at times adult men. It's so normalised that we wear gendered uniforms and I see small shifts in our primaries but it's not fair and I can't see how adults are again trying to legislate against young girls' confront and ability to get an education safely.
It really is frightening that this is even a Bill needing proposed in this day and age. Why any person, especially man, would be having an opinion on school girls wearing trousers is beyond me. This is 2027 not the 1800s.
It should be up to each school to decide what should be worn regarding uniform. Uniforms should not be of certain brands and therefore expensive but the school should have some say as to what their pupils wear.
It shouldn't need a bill for this to happen as schools should already implement this option in their own policies however I fully support this and it's well overdue.
It would be good to let pupils choose to wear trousers as some people may feel uncomfortable in skirts. It's always good to have a choice. It would be much warmer in the winter too.
It. Is. 2026.
That this even needs addressed and has not been previously is hard to believe.
As the mum of a daughter who raised this in primary school and was ignored by her head, it needs to be directed from government down.
We need to do better.
It's 2026 we should not be arguing if girls should or shouldn't be allowed to wear trousers in school.
This doesn't happen in the work place so why is it happening to young girls?
It's about time this was allowed
It's absolutely UNBELIEVABLE that in 2026 this even has to be legislated for.
It's all about letting girls have a choice. Why should they be forced to wear a skirt? Men should try having a period and see how it feels! Trousers would be much more comfortable at times like that
It's disappointing that this is still an issue in our society. As a primary [REDACTED] we had written to the prime minister to request that this equality was implemented for girls. Our schools, EA and DE could have shown stronger leadership.
It's disgraceful that this is even a debate in 2026. People of all genders should be allowed to wear what they feel comfortable in.

It's disgraceful that this issue of safety and equality is even up for debate, but thank you to those assembly members who are supporting it.
It's outrageous that this legislation is needed due to the Education Minister's intransigence. Men should not be telling women and girls what to wear!
It's ridiculous that girls aren't able to wear trousers
It's ridiculous, embarrassing, and frankly that this is still an issue in 2026. Who does forcing little girls and teenagers to wear skirts benefit? I dread to linger on that question for too long. Forcing girls to wear skirts holds no benefit towards their education and in fact does the opposite- it holds them back and makes them vulnerable.
It's sad that it has come down to having to create a bill in order to allow girls the basic human right of dignity and to feel comfortable in their uniform. I fully support the bill as a mother [REDACTED] we have been very fortunate that our girls schools don't have an issue with them wearing trousers to school if they want but we still had to ask for permission to do so.
It's 2026 and it's about time we stopped letting archaic traditions get in the way of common sense. I would also be taking a close look at who is opposing this Bill and asking questions as to their motivation.
It's 2026 and we are in Northern Ireland so the weather alone should be a reason and comfort also to allow all children to be able to enjoy and interact in all activities without anything stopping it.
It's 2026, anyone attending our publicly funded schools should be free to choose to wear trousers as part of the uniform. I left school 20+ years ago, I find it abhorrent that this has not been rectified to date.
It's 2026, we shouldn't be telling anyone what they MUST wear
It's 2026, Women in the workplace have and do wear trousers. Nurses, doctors, all professions wear trousers. Why are girls and young women not being allowed the choice to be covered. I can't believe that this has had to be made a Bill to go through. Make the sensible decision to let everyone wear trousers
It's 2026. Let girls have the option of trousers if they want.
It's 2026. Time to stop treating girls like future housewives that need to be appealing to their breadwinner husbands!
Let them have the choice and be comfortable and avoid unwanted sexual attention/abuse from boys and disgusting grown men.
A survey for girls on the harassment they face whilst wearing their school uniform should be done. The number of boys who think it's OK to grab, lift a skirt, upskirt is disgusting enough but the number of grown men with a school girl fetish is even worse. TALK TO THE GIRLS
It's 2026.....just allow trousers for girls and young women.
It's about time that girls have this choice, long overdue.
It's an absolute farce that girls can't decide what to wear on their own legs. We should not be forcing them to wear a skirt if they're uncomfortable doing so for ANY reason.
It's disgusting that it's taken this long. I thought NI was part of the UK the rest of the UK did this 30 years ago
It's hard enough to identify who or what is in front of you at times without girls dressing as boys at school as well. This bill leaves it open for boys, who wish to wear skirts, to make complaints. Why not? New symbols for toilets will have to be thought of. Dear forbid the girl should be wearing a skirt. It is also unacceptable that the Christian Schools are not exempt.
It's literally 2026. What possible reason could there actually be to not allow trousers
It's long overdue. It would absolutely be a positive move for schools.
It's really just 'odd' (being polite) to demand that young girls must wear skirts.
It's ridiculous in this day and age that this has to be argued. Kids should be allowed to be comfortable to learn, and wear trousers if they wish. I myself had issues in school with male teachers looking inappropriately at myself and other students in our skirts and I would be appalled if that happened my daughter.
It's ridiculous that in 2026 that women and girls cannot wear what they want.
It's ridiculous that in 2026, schools have the power to force girls to wear skirts as part of their uniform. They should be able to wear trousers as women are in every other profession and aspect of society. It's archaic and sexist that girls can be forced to wear a skirt.

Its ridiculous that its needed,I can wear trousers to work why cant my kids wear trousers to secondary school? They already can in primary school. Grow up already.
It's ridiculous that this Bill is required, but I welcome it in response to the refusal of the Ed Minister to respect and value girls.
It's scandalous that girls are not allowed to wear trousers in this day and age. My daughter has [REDACTED] and wearing trousers would have been a great support for her. The school did not approve. NI needs to catch up with other places in the UK
Just do it. Simple.
Just pass the bill and get with the times. Saying as attendance matters then support girls to feel more able to attend by allowing them to learn in comfortable clothing
Legislation and procedures already exist to help protect young people and to give them a voice/opinion. Forcing through this Bill will further erode and limit the authorities in each school by making them appear subject to the whim and wish of the pupils.
The confusion surrounding transgenderism and dealing with it in the classroom will not be helped or alleviated by this Bill.
In effect what might be seen as a little change to uniform policy (where most schools already allow for trousers/leggings in PE activities to provide warmth and comfort and protect modesty) has an underlying threat which could result in additional challenges and unsettledness for pupils and staff.
Let girls wear bloody trousers. It's 2026
Let the girls wear trousers .
Let young women choose
Long overdue
Long overdue, but glad to see this coming in.
Long overdue.
Long overdue. Thanks for bringing this forward.
Majority of females in Northern Ireland will have a story about being sexually harassed in school skirts whether that is comments, physical touching, up-skirting or worse. This bill should have been passed years ago, it is 2026. All girls have the right to an education without having to worry.
Majority of primary and post primary school uniforms are outdated and sexist Girls should have the right to wear trousers as women do in the workplace Boys and girls should have choice of branded school tracksuit, do away with shirts and ties and formal trousers Let kids feel comfortable to learn
Many schools make their pupils (boys and girls) to dress as mini-adults from decades ago, e.g., wearing ties and dress shirts. The pupils look more like adults than the actual adults in the school! You rarely find an adult in a school wearing a tie or dress shirts. Or female teachers wearing skirts. School uniforms should be comfortable for the pupils (as the school staff use comfortable clothes to work) and easy and not expensive for parents to buy and maintain. Bringing school uniforms to the 21st century would definitely help. Finally, we should hear what pupils have to say about school uniforms. They are the ones having to wear it, not us. My daughter (she is 7) has very compelling reasons for not liking it and a very sensible view on what a good school uniform should be. I would imagine that most pupils would engage in a positive way in such discussion.
Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May, and Liz Truss all wore trousers while serving as Prime Minister. Surely our uniform guidelines needn't be more conservative than the dress chosen by women leading the Conservative Party! (Queen Elizabeth II also wore trousers.)
men fighting to keep young schoolgirls in skirts is extremely bad optics, whatever their true concern may be

My child is male, this therefore doesn't really affect him.
If I had a daughter and she wanted to wear trousers and the school told me "no" I would ignore that school, let her wear them and go to court if needed. These are people's children. They are the most important people in the world to them. Do not allow shallow archaic rules to hinder them.
My daughter had expressed that she was uncomfortable throughout her secondary school experience wearing a skirt, having worn trousers throughout her primary school experience. As a teacher, I can foresee all the benefits as stated in Clause 1, and have already seen benefits in our school which has a gender neutral uniform.
My daughter has [REDACTED] problems - as a consequence she wears [REDACTED] She will soon begin secondary school and this has been a huge worry of hrs as she likes to be like everyone else but yet it would be more appropriate for her to wear trousers.
My daughter is going into P6 and has been commenting for the past few years that it is unfair that boys get to wear trousers - it's about time something was done to allow girls the option of wearing trousers if they want to.
My daughter was able to wear trousers in her primary school it's a complete disgrace that in 2026 this is even an issue. She is now going into 2nd year. She feels so uncomfortable in a skirt. It's cold in winter, pupils are frequently asked to sit on assembly hall floor and skirts are not acceptable for this. This outdated, draconian rule needs to change.
My daughter was [REDACTED] due to having to wear skirts, only her teacher pushed for her school to allow trousers for girls as part of their uniforms . She is going into [REDACTED] and is already talking about how it's going to be difficult in big school, as she is not comfortable in skirts. She asks how is it fair that boys can wear trousers and have the freedom without being restricted by a skirt. It is clear other girls feel the same, [REDACTED] wearing P.E trousers all of last year, and their parents are asking me where they can buy smarter trousers for their girls this year.
My daughters school skirt is light grey. [REDACTED] she is so worried about bleeding through onto her light grey skirt. Because if she did she would be laughed at and bullied in school. [REDACTED] If she could wear black trousers like the boys then if she did leak onto her trousers it would be much less noticeable. She would also be far more comfortable in trousers. She wear cycling shorts under her skirt so no one can look up her skirt She wouldn't gave to do that if she wore trousers
N/A
na
Never should grown adults tell young girls that they must bear their legs to attend a public school here - it is beyond ridiculous. For equality and dignity purposes girls should have the right to the cover and protection that trousers provide. We have been slow to reach this point as a society but I am delighted that the education committee have rightly pursued this matter. Go raibh maith agaibh.
No female should be told what she can and can't wear. The fact that there has to be a bill to provide this choice to girls is shameful. This is a matter of equality, dignity and choice.
No one should be able to dictate how another person dresses. NO ONE
Northern Ireland has one of the worst records for abuse towards women. We owe it to our girls to give them every possible advantage to succeed.
Northern Ireland is far behind the times when a bill is only coming in 2026 to allow girls to wear trousers in school. This allows girls to feel more comfortable and allows them to focus on their lessons in school.
Not allowing girls to wear trousers to school is ridiculous. You would never expect to have this debate for female MLAs. Young women and girls should be afforded the same rights as adult women. We live in a cold, wet country and there isn't an adult out there who would want to wear a skirt to work everyday in the winter, so why should we force our girls to do so?
Not enough is being done to draw attention to schools specifying the use of branded or labelled goods for kit (O'Neills is the specific example.) Girls wearing trousers to school should've been dealt with decades ago.
Not required. It would be better to concentrate on the lack of education happening in schools due to focus being on ridiculous things such as this.

On a slightly different tack - I very strongly object to schools insisting only branded clothing, especially everyday shirts MUST be worn. Grand daughter currently starting [REDACTED] -MUST wear school polo shirt daily - cost at her size is almost £28 per shirt! I thought this type of branding had been stopped. for 5 polo shirts alone the cost is almost £140, plus the other branded items, including coat £50, jumper £40 each and branded PE kit, about £80 for her size, so over £400 in total for branded items, never mind the other plain black items plus schoolbag and contents. 5 plain white polo shirts from a reputable trader cost £10 but the child won't wear them due to fear of being ridiculed by her peers and in trouble from the school. Ridiculous state of affairs and SHAME on the school! Would appreciate this complaint being passed on to someone else to action and put the school right - simply not acceptable.

Only what I've said already on questions 7 and 9. I would argue this bill should go further, and enshrine the right for a pupil of any gender to chose whether they wear trousers, skirts, shorts, or any other appropriate leg covering as part of their main and PE uniforms. That is genuine equality for all.

Overall cost of school uniforms need looked at once again.

Overall, I strongly support the Bill and believe that every pupil should have the option to wear trousers as part of their school uniform, across the board from nursery through to high school.

This is about giving children and young people a simple choice that improves physical comfort, practical coverage, personal dignity and warmth, particularly in cold and wet weather. I also believe this is an important issue of equality. It is outdated to have school uniform policies that place different expectations or restrictions on pupils based on gender. Girls should not be disadvantaged by being expected to wear skirts or dresses when trousers are a more comfortable, practical and weather-appropriate option.

Giving every pupil the same choice respects their dignity, personal autonomy and equality, and ensures that school uniform policies reflect the rights and needs of children and young people today rather than outdated attitudes.

I also feel that 1 August 2027 is too far away. If this Bill is being introduced to provide greater choice, comfort, dignity and equality, I would support the new guidance being updated and brought into effect as soon as reasonably practicable, so that pupils can benefit from these changes sooner. No pupil should have to wait unnecessarily for a more comfortable and practical uniform option.

Overall, this Bill represents a timely and meaningful improvement to school uniform policy in Northern Ireland. It addresses long-standing concerns around equality, safeguarding, and pupil wellbeing in a way that is both practical and proportionate. By placing the right to wear trousers on a statutory footing, the Bill ensures that girls are not left to negotiate individually with schools, removing an unnecessary burden from pupils and families.

The Bill also strengthens transparency and accountability by requiring the Department of Education to publish its guidelines, ensuring that uniform policy is accessible, consistent, and open to scrutiny. This is particularly important given the wide variation in uniform practices across schools.

In addition, the Bill supports a more inclusive school environment. Allowing trousers and other appropriate leg coverings helps pupils participate fully in learning, recreation, and outdoor activities without discomfort or embarrassment. It also aligns uniform policy with modern safeguarding expectations, particularly in relation to preventing upskirting and supporting girls during menstruation.

The implementation timeline is reasonable and gives schools clarity while ensuring that the reforms are not delayed unnecessarily. The financial impact is minimal, making this a cost-effective way to deliver meaningful equality and wellbeing benefits.

Taken together, the Bill is a balanced, rights-based measure that modernises uniform policy, protects pupils, and promotes fairness across the education system.

Pass the bill and move forward.

This isn't political, this shouldn't even be debated.

Paul Givan is an inept minister and I am frustrated the committee has to spend time adding this when this should've just been incorporated in the first place

Paul Givan should resign

Pioneers who blazed the trail for women and girls in the Western world wearing trousers were doing so before the 1800s. They eventually gained this right in the early 1850s. The fact that we are even having to fight for a “Trousers Bill” over two centuries later is simply ridiculous and disgraceful. Perhaps Minister Paul Givan should be forced to work in skirts or shorts. Maybe he should give press conferences on the matter while standing on those draughty stairs in Stormont, with the winter wind whipping up his backside. Surely, he could employ his time more efficiently by focusing on the many very real and pressing issues facing our education system, instead of indulging in such frivolous and embarrassing backwardness. Failing all else, all pupils across the North of Ireland, male, female and otherwise, should wear skirts in solidarity. I’m sure the media attention on this would draw international interest. It would highlight how completely ridiculous the proposal is, to ban girls and young women from wearing trousers to school, in 2026.

Please allow schools to be able to set their own policies across the board and not be ruled by individuals who are often without reality of how schools manage and negotiate any change.
Let leaders lead !!

Please consider these further points made by author and journalist Caroline Criado Perez in her book Invisible Women which highlight potential negative health implications of having to wear a skirt to school.

Restricts physical play and activity: Studies cited in the book show that girls are less active during school breaks and lunchtimes when forced to wear skirts compared to when they are allowed to wear trousers. (I would add to this that it also lessens the likelihood of choosing to cycle to/from school.)

Modesty anxiety: Skirts restrict natural movements—like running, climbing, or sitting comfortably on the floor—because girls are conditioned from a young age to avoid flashing their underwear and fear the consequences of accidentally doing this.

Cold weather discomfort: In winter, skirts offer far less thermal protection than trousers, keeping girls uncomfortably cold and discouraging outdoor activity.

Please for the sake of those girls who really want to wear trousers to school, just let them. In all other areas of life this is not an issue.

Please give ALL female pupils attending school in Northern Ireland the option to wear trousers to school, if they wish. Schools shouldn't have a say. It should be down to parents and pupils to decide.

Please give all pupils the basic right of equality and feeling comfortable in what they wear while learning

Please let all pupils have the option to wear trousers to and in school.

I can think of many potential benefits, many previously outlined by yourselves.

Please take into account the wellbeing and practical needs of pupils not the financial impact of any amendments.

Primary and secondary children's uniforms need to be practical and more unisex that it can be used more widely in the family

Religious traditions should be respected and accomadated.

Requiring girls to be forced to wear skirts is utterly antiquated.

Righteousness exalteth a nation:
but sin is a reproach to any people.
Proverbs 14 v 34

School trousers for girls should be an option. Please see previous comments.

School uniform policies should prioritize the comfort, equality, and well-being of students rather than outdated traditions. Forcing girls to wear skirts in the unpredictable Northern Irish weather is impractical. Allowing trousers is not a radical political statement; it is a basic matter of health, mobility, and equality. This choice belongs to the individual child and their family, not to political parties or school boards. Arguments against trousers often stem from traditional or conservative religious viewpoints, sometimes referencing biblical texts regarding gender-specific clothing. However, looking at this through an objective historical lens reveals a flaw in that logic: Historical Context: In the ancient world when these texts were written, modern trousers did not exist. Both men and women wore variations of robes, tunics, and draped garments. Evolution of Dress: What is considered "men's" or "women's" clothing changes entirely depending on the era and culture. Modern Modesty: In the 21st century, trousers are a standard, modest, and professional staple of women's attire worldwide, including in corporate, legal, and governmental environments. Physical Activity: Trousers allow girls to run, sit comfortably, and engage in school activities without worrying about modesty or restrictions. Warmth and Health: Northern Ireland winters are harsh. Forcing students to wear skirts in freezing temperatures is a health and comfort issue. Equality: Uniform policies should prepare students for the modern workplace, where women have the freedom to choose between suits, trousers, or skirts. By framing the issue around practical equality and historical context, this shows that the girls wearing trousers to school argument is based on logic, fairness, and progress rather than political friction.
School uniforms should be comfortable and practical. Everyone should have the right to wear trousers. This should not be up for debate in 2026. It's an odd use of time and resources and disappointing that the Minister blocked this with the original review of uniform guidance.
School uniforms should be relaxed and more modern. It's time to move away from the formal suits for school
Schoolgirls in NI should be allowed to choose to wear trousers or skirts We are sick and tired of being told what to do by old white men who have religious and ulterior motives for ruling over women's and girls lives We need to support young women to have the freedom of choice on all parts of their lives
Schools should be required to remove gendering completely from their policies. Have a trouser and skirt option, if desired, and require all pupils to wear a suitable uniform.
Schools, independent or not, should be the removing the choice of pupils to wear trousers on any grounds. The bill to allow all pupils this choice is long overdue.
See previous paragraph. Please pass this for the dignity and comfort of our young girls. I wish it had been about when I was attending school.
Should be allowed to wear trousers regardless of what the school say. Shambolic that it had had to come to this.
Should have been done years ago.
Signing this on behalf of my younger self and all the girls currently in education or who will be entering it.
Some schools emphasise the importance of the correct uniform and should concentrate more on providing a school that is conducive to learning. They need to understand the backgrounds of their pupils and not worry about small things like correct shoes or whether someone wants to wear trousers or not. Girls not being given the choice on trousers or skirts is old fashioned and clearly a decision that was made by a man.
Stop wasting money on trivial items and pass this bill
Students have more freedom of movement in trousers, especially primary children who crawl sit on floor, climb etc.
Thank you to all who put work into, and who supported, this bill.
Thank you to the members of the Education Committee who have listened to young people, young people who have been campaigning for this for a very long time. Their voices matter and should be not only listened to, but respected and their views taken seriously.

That a bill is required for this is disappointing however as the father of a girl who will be attending school in the future I see this as an essential step towards ensuring her wellbeing and the wellbeing of all girls.
The Bill is common sense and should have been passed many years ago.
The Bill should go further in that school uniforms need to be updated to reflect modern styles and school uniform policies in schools need to be more relaxed in general in this changing world.
The case of the young man who wore the school skirts to protest the school fining his parents (because he required a certain fit, owing to his unusual height and weight) highlighted the silly and very narcissistic people making themselves decisions. -school is not the military - school is supposed to focus on teaching children to think and reason. - why are trousers such a big deal in 2026, when the schools do not have textbooks or teach Latin and grammar. The labour party has successfully disarmed the public, rendering most graduates of university incapable of expressing or interpreting language and the written word.
The Committee already engaged extensively on this issue. The Minister's response to dare has been wholly unacceptable. Women and girls have to advocate for their rights too much as it is, suggesting that it is already possible for girls to request to wear trousers on a case by case basis is a dereliction of duty. I have been disgusted by some of the views expressed in the Education Committee on this topic, specifically the DUP members. The idea that the schools autonomy should come before children's rights is honestly baffling. I don't know how they stand by this position. It was also frustrating to watch expert witness after expert witness provide evidence of the harms girls experience under the current policy and continually watch these members reply with their opinion. Their opinion is not more important than women and girls nor the experts in front of them. Frankly, I am devastated that recent events in their own party have not caused them to reflect on their position. Personally, as a pupil in NI who was forced to wear a skirt, I experienced exclusion from sport, discomfort from blisters as a result of wearing tights in the rain, discomfort from bloating during my period, sexual harassment and then restricted movement when trying to escape said harassment, period indignity, the inability to sit on the floor comfortably, the biting cold on bare legs in winter, discomfort due to fit issues during body changes which trousers can accommodate more easily and therefore additional expense. There must be no exceptions allowed based on the ethos of a school. This is a human rights issue. Also, I'd love to know why these people are so determined to keep young girls in revealing clothing when they normally preach modesty? We have recently seen a high profile case where young girls were failed monstrously by the adults in their lives, including those who's hypocritical beliefs would dictate that girls cannot protect themselves from all the issues listed above by simply giving them the automatic right to wear trousers to school. The specific referral to the Consultation response in point 14 is honestly insulting following recent revelations about faith based organisations regarding covering up abuse. The opinion of the church should not come first. Presumably the legal and other advice received by the Committee on this matter also provided a similar viewpoint. In the current environment of VAWG in NI, why are still debating an issue of such basic human rights? How do young boys learn to respect girls when they know they are protected by politicians who happen to be lead by their faith rather than human rights. I'm honestly just tired and angry. Thank you for your work on this and I hope the Bill passes swiftly.
The cost of some school skirts can be exorbitant and unweildly
The current legislation governing school uniform policies is significantly outdated and does not reflect the needs or expectations of children and young people today. Schools should have uniform policies that promote equality, fairness, comfort and inclusion. Allowing girls to wear trousers as part of the school uniform is a simple and practical change that would give pupils greater choice without compromising standards or school identity. Updating the legislation would help ensure that all children are treated fairly and that school uniform policies reflect modern values of equality and respect.
The fact a DUP minister is the one that could have easily changed this but instead insisted that he would rather see young girls in skirts just says it all...
The fact that in 2026 we are still debating and policing what girls can wear is absolutely disgraceful. My 2 daughters will be wearing trousers every day from now on and be damned with the consequences

The fact that it even comes into question that it will minimise up skirting is enough that this should not have ever been an argument and pupils should be allowed to freely wear trousers as and when wanted to school. It also shouldn't be this hard to pass something so simple and easy. As the parent of a little girl and a past pupil of an all girls school, it should have never taken this long or much of a fight to change something so small and simple.
The fact that this is still an outstanding matter, is an embarrassment and proves Stormont isn't working
The freedom to wear what you want to wear, within the already rigid school uniform system, seems to be a practical common sense decision that I wholly support.
The majority of workplaces, universities and other institutions would not have the right to dictate that girls have to wear skirts, and employees would likely have a basis for legal action if an employer attempted to force them to wear certain items of clothing (not relating to PPE) so why are school children afforded less rights?
It is also moronic to expect girls to wear skirts in colder weather, which in Belfast is all but 2 weeks of the year.
-The right to wear trousers applies consistently across all schools, without exemptions. -Pupils do not need permission or have to justify their decision. -Affordable, practical options are available from several retailers. -Girls have access to suitable alternatives for PE, sport and outdoor activities, including longer shorts or other appropriate leg coverings. -Schools communicate the change clearly to pupils, parents, staff and uniform suppliers. -Staff receive guidance to prevent pupils experiencing stigma, bullying or discriminatory treatment. -Pupils, particularly girls and young women, are meaningfully involved in reviewing school uniform policies. -There is an accessible process for pupils and parents to report non-compliance or raise concerns.
The Schoolwear Association believes that school uniform continues to play an important role in school life. A clear and consistently applied uniform policy helps to create a shared school identity, reduce visible inequalities between pupils, support academic attainment and behaviour and create an environment in which pupils arrive at school ready to learn. Uniform policies can also support schools in maintaining clear expectations around behaviour and safeguarding. We believe these benefits are entirely compatible with giving pupils appropriate choice within a defined uniform policy. Providing all pupils with the option of wearing trousers enables individual circumstances and preferences to be accommodated while retaining the wider benefits of a common school uniform. It remains important that schools have sufficient flexibility to design and implement uniform policies that reflect the needs of their pupils and communities. The statutory right proposed by the Bill should therefore sit within that wider principle of school autonomy rather than lead to unnecessary prescription over other aspects of uniform policy.
The shorts for sports should be a standard cotton design not lycra or leggings.
The sooner this is modernised and implemented the better.
The supporting factor of skin covering being the best preventative measure against sun damage and skins cancer is something which should not be ignored/unmentioned.
The uniform bill should go further to remove the need for outdated formal wear at school. A more comfortable uniform is both practical and more conducive to learning. As an adult I would not wear a suit jacket (blazer) and heavy jumper each day. I support uniform but in a way that supports learning rather than clinging to old traditions because they look 'smart' for bypassers.
The use of school uniform is promoted equality and discipline, not to try to make children gender neutral
The wearing if trousers should be allowed and passed by stormont to prevent individual school bring allowed to choose this as an option. Causing more disparity between schools. It is completely ludicrous in 2026 that the debate is even happening. It astonishing to think of both the financial implications snd the waste if time that goes into these debates when a decision could be made quickly and effectively to allow this too occur.
The wearing of trousers for all school girls should never have been an issue. It's ludicrous that it has to take a Bill to rectify this inequality for girls. All schools have the ability to change their school uniform policy via their Board of Governors, which would be a more cost effective resolution, however if making it law is the only way for girls to get equality, then I support it wholeheartedly.

The year is 2026, I am a 40+ year old woman. I had the option of wearing trousers as part of my uniform, over 20 years ago. As a society, we should not be debating on the argument for and against, whether it be for comfort, convenience, equality or other reasons. These debates and processes are an unnecessary waste of resources, a level of common sense should prevail, general consensus from platforms like of citizen assemblies to deal with change should be utilised. Legislation needs a major overall to move with changing times.
There are so many positive reasons why girls should be allowed to wear trousers to schools - bizarre that old white men have an opinion on what girls wear to school and furthermore have been listened to and their wishes acted upon up until now. It is very much time for a change.
There is absolutely no reason girls should be required to wear skirts to school
There is ample evidence that requiring girls to wear skirts inhibits and reduces participation in sport and physical activity. It is of utmost importance that we establish healthy lifestyles in our children, to support their long term health and development. This, of course, includes emphasising the importance of physical fitness and exercise for health. Any actions that can be taken to encourage physical fitness and physical activity should be prioritized.
There should be some way to ensure schools must update their uniform rules. Otherwise if schools decide for themselves to ignore the guidance and they face no consequences, some students will be losing out in an unfair way.
This bill is a huge step forward, though it's true execution needs to be considered. The children who wear the uniforms are best placed to provide inputs to this. In GB children have helped design uniforms and been integral to the process.
This bill is crucially important to girls in Northern Ireland.
This bill is incredibly welcome. I as a parent and as a teacher feel it is so important for our girls in schools to have the option to wear trousers. School uniforms can be so limiting to young girls and this is a step in the right direction.
This bill is long over due. Schools should be required to offer girls the option to wear trousers to school and for those not currently able to this is likely to have a significant impact on any girls who really dislike skirts or feel self conscious in them. Many schools have offered this option for many years thankfully as well as inclusive options for religious reasons and it should be consistent policy for all schools. Offering a standard black or grey trouser for girls is not a significant amendment to uniform policy but could have a significant impact for girls.
This bill is long overdue and should be welcomed in without question. The benefit for many pupils will be hugely noticeable.
This Bill is overdue, but nonetheless very welcome. Students are reliable witnesses to their own needs and it is imperative that they have the choice to dress themselves as they, and they alone, see appropriate to enable them to go to school and receive an education unhindered. There is no basis whatsoever for enforcing the wearing of skirts on students and it is highly unethical.
This Bill is vitally important to allow girls the choice to wear trousers. It is archaic that the association with skirts is the enforced uniform choice for females.
This bill must go through for the dignity, comfort and safety of all pupils affected
This Bill needs to happen for girls to no longer feel vulnerable at school. Uniforms should help make everyone feel comfortable while still representing a school's identity. Upskirting, harassment, and fat shaming should not be part of a girl's day-to-day at any secondary school and in primary school, boys and girls wearing trousers removes the 'otherness' created by girls wearing skirts - 'I can't climb a tree because I'm wearing a skirt,' 'I can't run fast because my skirt will blow round me.' These are not petty comments; mandatory uniform options based on gender create an unconscious bias and sets a dated precedent that skirts are what girls should wear to be seen as a girl/young woman.
This Bill should be unnecessary and the minister should announce that all pupils can wear trousers. The money spent on the creation and analysis of this survey could be spent elsewhere in the Assembly.
This bill should cover allowing girls to wear trousers for the whole school day/week & not just for pe/outdoor/recreational activities. Get out of the dark ages please. My daughter is still forced to wear a tunic that

was a key part of the school's uniform in the 1960s and still hasn't been modernised and is no longer appropriate for kids in 2026. She looks like she's going to Enid Blyton's Malory Towers boarding school, totally ridiculous.
This bill will bring the laws associated with uniforms into the 21st century.
This is 2026 not the dark ages it should not be men making rules what girls wear in school
This is a common sense approach to school uniforms. It does not encroach on a parent's choice of what their child wears to school, for those who wish to wear skirts can continue to do so and those who wish to wear trousers will now have that right irrespective of what school they wish to attend.
This is a huge waste of money, resources and time when the Minister for Education could have looked at the overwhelming majority of opinions supporting girls wearing trousers and ensured it was put into legislation with the stroke of a pen. It is a shameful waste.
This is a long overdue bill
This is a long overdue change that brings schools into line with work environment. Can you imagine the uproar if bosses told their employees that they have to wear a piece of clothing that the vast majority of them do not do so their free time?
This is a much needed step forward in ensuring the comfort and safety of young girls.
This is about choice not about gender.
This is an antiquated debate. There is no valid reason why girls should only wear skirts. To deny them the right to wear trousers is to deny them autonomy over their own bodies, a dangerous precedent to set. When we talk about supporting and protecting women and girls from harm and violence, this is where that protection starts, by teaching them at school age that they have autonomy over their bodies. By letting them feel as confident and comfortable as their male peers. Schools in other countries such as England and Scotland changed their stance on this over 20 years ago. There is proven data that removing physical and psychological barriers such as mandatory skirt wearing, helps to engage girls more in education. It is an embarrassment to Northern Ireland that this bill has still not been passed, there are much more pressing issues to be resolved than girls wearing trousers. To continue to block this bill is to continue to take educational opportunities from girls.
This is common sense to let children choose between skirts or trousers.
As a child of the 80s/90s there were times I was unsafe wearing the skirt. Children should never have to go through that.
Trousers should always have been a right for girls to wear. I fear the only people against it will be dirty old men or women who support dirty old men.
No one should feel like they have the right to tell Children to wear skirts or shorts when the children don't consent to showing themselves and want to cover up.
This is completely overdue and absolutely necessary. Girls have suffered long enough.
This is long overdue and should have been a given
This is long overdue. Let's give girls the comfort they deserve.
This is so important to make education more equitable for girls.
This is something that I should have been able to have when I was at school in the 90s. It's frankly ridiculous that this has to be legislated on, schools should have the sense to allow it.
This is surely the simplest and most logical bill ever proposed it would be an amendment that benefits so many and harms precisely none.
This is well overdue and is a big move to reduce misogyny
This issue should have been resolved many many years ago. Here we are in the 21st century hoping to get a Bill passed so a section of our school population receives equal treatment to their male counterparts. This has been blatant discrimination and continues to be blatant discrimination against the female school population. The education minister, politicians and education providers have been breaching their duty of care to the female school population. For example, issues with periods, extreme weather conditions and up-skirting, yet those responsible have continued to ignore a very practical solution that would assist not necessarily resolve.

This needs to be implemented I fought for this at school 45 years ago and I still can't believe females have restrictions on what they wear
This needs to be implemented in a modern, progressive NI society that is not ruled by outdated fundamental, religious beliefs.
This right of equality for girls and young women in education in Northern Ireland is extremely long overdue. As a parent of a daughter who was permitted, without incident, by her school to wear trousers it was essential to enable her to not only attend school, but to learn in safety and comfort and be successful. School is an extremely difficult time and place for many. This right will empower and respect all students creating a positive more equitable environment. Crucially it will be safer for girls and young women who increasingly face the risk of sexual abuse from males, both in school and outside school, that destroys lives. Equality of uniform may in some, perhaps small, way enable boys and young men in school to respect girls and women and could be used as part of a wider conversations or development of schemes to stop men attacking women. In addition, religion should have zero bearing on the right of any pupil attending any school in Northern Ireland to wear trousers. Education should be the a key focus for schools not sex/gender segregation or discrimination through uniforms.
This should have been brought in a long time ago.
This should have been done in the first instance - the Minister has allowed his personal views to delay the matter and no doubt this has caused extra expense to deal with separately.
This should have been part of the original legalisation.
This should have been sorted 20 years ago, it is time for it to happen now
This should not even be up for debate. How is a child asking to wear trousers requiring a government proposal? It is not a green or orange issue either. A utter waste of money and time.
This should not even need to be a consultation.
This should not need to be debated in 2026.
Young girls deserve the right to wear leg coverings in line with school colours.
If not, why not? I think that's what most people don't understand. If someone wants young girls to be forced to continue to wear skirts or dresses, why? What is the rationale and reasonable argument?
This shouldn't even be a debate in 2026. I started secondary school in 1992 and our school introduced trousers as an option for girls that year.
This shouldn't even be an issue....girls should be allowed to wear trousers if they choose to.
This shouldn't have had to be made into legislation to give equality to girls at school. Schools should have brought in these measures by themselves many years ago, however I am glad this legislation if passed will finally give children the choice of what will make them feel comfortable and focus on school work
This shouldn't need to have been done but should have been included in the original school uniform act 2026 or any prior uniform laws/policy
This will allow girls to participate in ad hoc physical activity and sports at lunch and break times. It will also allow girls to run in any situation where they feel unsafe.
This will also be beneficial for young people in schools of differing gender identities and religious backgrounds that require modesty
This would have been a welcome decision when I was at school. Why should girls have to wear skirts at school when outside of school they can wear jeans, trousers or leggings that allow them to wear what they chose.
Tights or socks should also be allowed for people who choose to wear skirts. Lots of schools still force people to wear tights even in the hottest days
To bring equality and freedom of choice it is essential that girls have the right to wear trousers to school. Common sense must prevail.
To not allow female pupils to have an option of covering their legs or wearing trousers is absolute sexism.
Tracksuits as uniform! Better for everyone!
Trousers for goodness sake. I am aghast that this is up for debate.
Trousers, shorts etc should be plain as no need for school symbols

██████████ I was a young teenager having the same debate with my teachers. I had to endure discomfort, limited movement, freezing temperatures, paranoia when I was on my period, and endless harassment from boys and men who seemed to think that my wearing a skirt was an open invitation to comment on my legs, my body in general, whether or not I was wearing knickers, and other comments I'm still too embarrassed to repeat. I was told that wearing a skirt was to protect my dignity, but where was this dignity when boys were constantly trying to pull my skirt up? Where was my dignity when I was enduring all this sexual harassment? I cannot believe that even after all these years, I'm seeing the same debate and hearing the same horror stories from girls. This obsession with policing girls' clothing is a stayover of antiquated misogyny that has no place in an increasingly modern Northern Ireland.
Unbranding school uniforms and making it more affordable and also not identifiable for our kids is next!
Uniform rules are archaic and out of date. It is time to put student needs first and end these nonsense rules.
Uniforms are too expensive and outdated. Need to move with the times and let girls wear trousers.
We are living in the dark ages and need to catch up. It's sickening that anyone is resistant to this change.
We don't expect Women to wear skirts to work, these antiquated school rules belong in the past. Our girls deserve better. I find it bizarre that we're debating this in 2026.
We live in a different world now compared to years ago. Different views, religions and cultures live within our society. With that rules need to change. Most girls attending school feel comfortable wearing a skirt but quite a few would prefer to wear trousers, especially in colder weather. With girls now getting their period a lot younger, they would feel more comfortable wearing trousers to school than wearing a skirt. I have a young daughter who has a couple of years to go before heading to secondary school and I would love for her to be able to make the decision on whether to wear a skirt or trousers to school and not feel forced that she has to wear a skirt, especially if she has her period.
We welcome this legislation being brought forth, as we stated in this response and in the response that we submitted to the right to wear trousers consultation earlier this year. We believe this is a step in the right direction for freedom of choice for students and for women and girls, however more must be done to ensure equality and safety for women and girls in these spaces. We believe this is also a step in the right direction for the rights of children and young people as we had discussions about framing our support for this bill that were grounded in the UNCRC.
Welcome to the 21st century. About time to update school uniforms
We're living in 2026. All pupils should have an equal right to wear items of clothing that protect their dignity and allow them to focus on learning.
What are the consequences for schools who don't comply or make it difficult for pupils who wish to wear trousers? What recourse would pupils / parents have? That needs to be clear in the guidance.
What girls wear to school should not be policed by, or be at the discretion of an individual Education Minister. The minister tried to omit this option for girls which I find shocking.
When creating school uniform policies, there should be a consideration for how items will fit individuals differently. For example, low and high rise trousers will fit different students in different ways. Whilst each student might have different preferences, there should be a consideration to how these clothing items will impact students day to day life and will the items accommodate every student need? For example, if trousers are designed too tight or too low rise then students may feel exposed, uncomfortable or excluded from wearing the items altogether.
When I attended school, we were allowed to wear trousers after a rule change in third year. The majority of girls switched to trousers and never switched back to a skirt. ██████████ this made school more tolerable and offered me more comfort and confidence throughout the rest of my schooling. Several years after I left, they revoked the use of trousers. This was in the early 2000s. It is shameful it has taken this long to fix
Where was this when I was in school? I'm hopeful that girls won't have to feel the way I did back then but it took way too long. If this bill doesn't pass it's clear this country does not care about girls or women.

While neither a parent or student I feel strongly about this issue.

I vividly recall the negative physical and emotional aspects of being forced to wear skirts at school.

Feeling cold, both outside and inside the classroom, made school less enjoyable and learning more difficult for me and my female friends.

I relished non-uniform days, not for the chance to express my identity as some may assume, but simply for the very rare opportunity to feel physically warm and comfortable at school.

Wearing a skirt made participation in active games before, during and after school more difficult. We were less active as a result.

In secondary school my enjoyment of and passion for sports were negatively effected by the revealing nature and discomfort of the PE uniform. It shaped my perception of sport and exercise, reduced my participation, reduced sporting opportunities and negatively effected my health, both as a child and on into adulthood.

Studies show that female participation in sports falls significantly more than male participation during adolescence.

Ensuring access to sports uniforms in which girls feel physically comfortable, less self-conscious and more safe, would address a number of the barriers to participation identified in studies.

The potential financial benefits to The Province, as a result of increased participation in education and improved health outcomes alone makes me confident that this choice needs to be protected by the DE.

It is too important to be left as an option for schools to deny.

Furthermore, in the spirit of gender parity, mandating the provision of unisex uniform policy, with the same choices available to all should also be protected. However I feel this should be pursued separately in order to prevent any delay to the current proposal.

Whilst there could be some level of bullying frankly there is always some level of bullying. Better than being upskirted or slut shamed for wearing a skirt.

Why are girls treated like second class citizens?

If a girl feels more comfortable wearing trousers to school, let them.

School is tough enough without wearing something that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Why has it taken so long for this to happen? Why does the DUP constantly have to monitor everything women do with their bodies? Why does schoolgirls wearing trousers affect Paul Givan so much?

Why is any adult against under age girls being allowed to wear trousers?

Why we need a bill to ensure children have equal access to trousers with their school uniform is beyond archaic.

With only positive impact on school girls and with minimal financial impact the question remains as to why has this change not been implemented sooner. What was the justification to delay and require a separate bill? The public need to know and mitigate against this for future bills. The way of how this has been handled (a duplication of effort in requiring a second bill) is an inefficient approach which has undoubtedly come at a cost in resources needed to create and manage this bill.

Women and girls deserve the right to choose what they want to wear. Trousers should be an option and in 2026, this should not be an issue.

Women and girls should have the freedom to feel safe in a place of learning. Allowing them to choose trousers will facilitate this.

Women are penalised in every walk of life just for existing in their own bodies. Help make their early years a little bit easier.

Workplace gender and equality rights do not allow for discrimination against women for wearing trousers as long as dress codes are adhered to. It is very discouraging that school children are not given the same rights. School skirts are also often specific to each school and can only be sourced from certain shops. Trousers are more generic and can be bought in a wider range of retailers and often at a cheaper price.

Young girls should not be discriminated against or controlled by the acts of adult men who have never lived the experience of navigating the schooling system in uncomfortable and impractical clothing that they are forced to wear, particularly while male pupils are permitted to move freely in trousers. Policing what young girls wear in education should not even be a debate.