



## Northern Ireland Assembly

# School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill

### Notice of Amendments tabled on 3 July 2025 for Consideration Stage

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#### **Clause 1, Page 1, Line 10**

Leave out ‘from time to time’ and insert ‘at least once every three years’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

#### **Clause 1, Page 1, Line 12**

At end insert -

‘(1A) When developing or reviewing such guidelines, the Department must have due regard to the requirements of Articles 3, 14, 23, 28 and 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989.

(1B) The Schedule sets out the text of Articles 3, 14, 23, 28 and 29 referred to in section (1A).’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

#### **Clause 1, Page 1, Line 18**

Leave out ‘may’ and insert ‘must’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

#### **Clause 1, Page 2, Line 1**

After ‘who’ insert ‘, including pupils and their parents or guardians,’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 1, Page 2, Line 9**

At end insert -

‘(6) The Department must lay any guidelines issued under this section before the Assembly.’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 2, Page 2, Line 12**

At end insert -

‘(1A) Guidelines under this Chapter must include provision prohibiting any aspects of school uniform policies which restrict choice of items of clothing on the basis of sex or gender.’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 2, Page 2, Line 15**

After ‘pupils,’ insert ‘including with respect to menstruation,’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 2, Page 2, Line 15**

At end insert -

‘(aa) practicality of clothing in relation to play-based curricula and outdoor learning, including within the Foundation Stage (as defined by the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007)’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 2, Page 2, Line 15**

At end insert -

‘(aa) promoting the safety of pupils with regard to road traffic’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 2, Page 2, Line 18**

At end insert -

‘(2A) Guidelines under this Chapter must include provision requiring school uniform policies to allow reasonable accommodations for cultural difference, religious practice, disability or special educational needs.’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 2, Page 2, Line 18**

At end insert -

‘(2A) Guidelines under this Chapter must include provision requiring school uniform policies to permit reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability or special educational needs, where items of clothing required by those policies cause distress or sensory discomfort or present a barrier to participation.’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 2, Page 2, Line 18**

At end insert -

‘(2A) The Department must issue guidance, in consultation with relevant advocacy groups and organisations, on how schools may adapt uniform policies to accommodate pupils with a disability or special educational needs.’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 2, Page 2, Line 18**

At end insert -

‘(2A) Guidelines under this Chapter must include provision requiring school uniform policies to ensure all items of clothing required are available for purchase from at least one retailer or provider which does not hold any formal or informal contract or agreement, with the school, relating to provision of such items of clothing.

(2B) Guidelines under this Chapter must include provision specifying that section 2A will not apply to any school uniform policy which includes a statement from the school manager explaining how such a contract or agreement delivers value for money with respect to items of clothing required by the school uniform policy.’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 2, Page 2, Line 18**

At end insert -

‘(2A) Guidelines under this Chapter must include provision requiring a manager of a school to publish, at least once per year, information regarding any formal or informal contracts or agreements, which the school holds with any retailer or provider, relating to provision of items of clothing required by the school uniform policy.

(2B) Provision under section 2A does not apply to any contracts or agreements which were in place before this Act received Royal Assent.’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 2, Page 2, Line 18**

At end insert -

‘(2A) Guidelines under this Chapter must require each school to facilitate or participate in a uniform reuse, loan, or bank scheme.’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 3, Page 2, Line 29**

Leave out ‘may’ and insert ‘must’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**New Clause**

After clause 4 insert -

**‘Reporting on school uniform costs and capping of expense**

**4A.—**(1) The Department must publish a written report, at least once every three years, detailing—

- (a) its assessment of the cost of school uniforms and their components, including mean costs, median costs and factors contributing to these, and
- (b) the effect of any capping of expense included in guidelines as a result of section (4), or if no such capping of expense has been set, the reasons for this, and
- (c) its subsequent plans for—
  - (i) reviewing and, if appropriate, amending the guidelines, and
  - (ii) imposing, ending or otherwise modifying any capping of expense.

(2) The first report under paragraph (1) must be published within the period of three years beginning with the date on which this Act receives Royal Assent.’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 6, Page 3, Line 29**

At end insert -

‘(3) A manager of a school must publish and operate procedures to enable complaints to be made concerning the school uniform policy, which must include provision permitting the school a maximum of three calendar months to issue a final response to any complaint.’

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 7, Page 3, Line 31**

Leave out subsection (1) and insert -

‘(1) The Department must give directions as follows to a manager of a school if the Department is satisfied that the manager is (or staff at the school are) in one or more material respects failing to adhere as required to guidelines under this Chapter.

(1A) The Department may give directions to a manager of a school as follows if the Department is satisfied that the school's pupils are liable to disciplinary measures or participatory disadvantages at the insistence of the manager (or of staff at the school) in consequence of breaching a school uniform policy applying at the school.'

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 7, Page 4**

Leave out paragraph (b)

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 7, Page 4, Line 30**

At end insert -

'(8) Where the Department gives directions to a school, it must publish these within three months of the directions first being given.'

*Chair, Committee for Education*

**Clause 15, Page 7, Line 4**

Leave out 'Sections 3 and 4 come' and insert 'Section 4 comes'

*Chair, Committee for Education*

After **Clause 16**, insert -

**'SCHEDULE**

**THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

*Article 3*

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.

3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

*Article 14*

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

#### *Article 23*

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

2. States Parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.

3. Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development.

4. States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international cooperation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination of and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

#### *Article 28*

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- (a) make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- (c) make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- (d) make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- (e) take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

*Article 29*

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

- (a) the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- (b) the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (c) the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- (d) the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- (e) the development of respect for the natural environment.

2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.'

*Chair, Committee for Education*