



## Northern Ireland Assembly

# School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill

## Notice of Amendments tabled on 24 September 2025 for Further Consideration Stage

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Clause 1, Page 1, Line 13

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 subsection (1A).’

*Mr Nick Mathison*

*Mrs Michelle Guy*

*Mr Pat Sheehan*

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 17

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.’

*Mr Nick Mathison*

*Mrs Michelle Guy*

*Mr Pat Sheehan*

*Mr Gerry Carroll*

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 20

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

*Mr Nick Mathison*  
*Mrs Michelle Guy*  
*Mr Pat Sheehan*

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 20

At end insert—

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

*Mr Nick Mathison*  
*Mrs Michelle Guy*  
*Mr Pat Sheehan*  
*Ms Cara Hunter*

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 27

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.’

*Mr Nick Mathison*  
*Mrs Michelle Guy*  
*Mr Pat Sheehan*

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 27

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.’

*Mr Nick Mathison*  
*Mrs Michelle Guy*  
*Mr Pat Sheehan*

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 27

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.’

*Mr Nick Mathison*

*Mrs Michelle Guy*

*Mr Pat Sheehan*

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 27

At end insert—

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

*Mr Nick Mathison*

*Mrs Michelle Guy*

*Mr Pat Sheehan*

Clause 3, Page 3, Line 13

Leave out ‘may’ and insert ‘must’

*Mr Nick Mathison*

*Mrs Michelle Guy*

*Mr Pat Sheehan*

Clause 7, Page 4, 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.’

*Mr Nick Mathison*

*Mrs Michelle Guy*

*Mr Pat Sheehan*

At end insert—

‘(iii) a report of an investigation relating to the school if sent to the Department under section 43 of the Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.’

*Mr Nick Mathison*

## **New Schedule**

After clause 17 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.’

*Mr Nick Mathison*

*Mrs Michelle Guy*

*Mr Pat Sheehan*

Clause 4, Page 3, Line 20

Leave out ‘may’ and insert ‘must’

*Mr Gerry Carroll*

Clause 14, Page 7, Line 33

At end insert—

‘(3A) A draft of regulations under this Chapter must be laid before the Assembly no later than the end of the period of 2 years beginning with the day on which this Chapter comes into operation.’

*Mr Gerry Carroll*

Clause 16, Page 8

Leave out clause 16 and insert—

**‘Commencement**

**16.** This Act comes into operation on the day after it receives Royal Assent.’

*Mr Gerry Carroll*

Clause 1, Page 2, Line 13

Leave out subsection (6)

*Minister of Education*

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 21

Leave out paragraph (b) and insert—

- ‘(b) nature and adequacy of clothing for pupils when engaging in particular parts of the curriculum by doing or through involvement in things such as—
- (i) classroom or academic subjects,
  - (ii) informal or play-based learning, or
  - (iii) recreational, sporting or outdoor activities,’

*Minister of Education*

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 28

Leave out subsections (3) to (6)

*Minister of Education*

### **New Clause**

After clause 2 insert—

#### **‘Clothing supplier agreements in guidelines**

**2A.—**(1) Guidelines under this Chapter must include provision—

- (a) containing a statement to the effect that school uniform policies are to be designed so as to ensure that all items or sets of clothing needed by pupils at a school are available for purchase from at least one supplier who is not party to an agreement for the sale of items or sets of clothing for the school’s pupils, but
- (b) making an exception in relation to a school uniform policy applying at a school which is accompanied by a declaration by a manager of the school to the effect that such an agreement secures value for money with respect to items and sets of clothing needed by pupils at the school.

(2) Guidelines under this Chapter must include provision requiring a manager of a school to publish, on the school’s website, information (to be updated at least annually) about any such agreement except a pre-commencement agreement.

(3) For the purpose of this section—

- (a) an agreement is an agreement (whether contractual or otherwise) entered into in the name of or on behalf of the school, and
- (b) a pre-commencement agreement is an agreement so entered into before this section comes into operation.’

*Minister of Education*

Clause 5, Page 3

Leave out clause 5

*Minister of Education*

Clause 6, Page 4, Line 14

At end insert—

‘(e) referring to Foundation Stage, or Key Stage 1, 2, 3 or 4, as mentioned in the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007.’

*Minister of Education*

Clause 8, Page 4, Line 31

Leave out ‘as follows to a manager of a school’ and insert ‘to a manager of a school as follows’

*Minister of Education*

Clause 8, Page 4, Line 36

After ‘to’ insert ‘undue’

*Minister of Education*

Clause 8, Page 5, Line 33

At end insert—

‘(8A) Nothing in this section prevents the Department from proceeding by way of a warning instead of giving directions (but no such warning prejudices the Department’s ability to give directions subsequently in relation to the same matter).’

*Minister of Education*

Clause 8, Page 5, Line 34

Leave out from ‘to’ to end of line 35 and insert ‘under this section, the Department must publish the text of them within 3 months of giving them.’

*Minister of Education*

Clause 13, Page 7, Line 7

Leave out ‘the preceding Chapter’ and insert ‘Chapter 1’

*Minister of Education*



Clause 13, Page 7, Line 8

Leave out ‘the preceding Chapter’ and insert ‘Chapter 1’

*Minister of Education*

Clause 14, Page 7, Line 18

Leave out ‘the preceding Chapter’ and insert ‘Chapter 1’

*Minister of Education*

Clause 14, Page 7, Line 19

Leave out ‘the preceding Chapter’ and insert ‘Chapter 1’

*Minister of Education*

Clause 14, Page 7, Line 33

Leave out ‘the preceding Chapter’ and insert ‘Chapter 1’

*Minister of Education*

#### **New Clause**

After clause 14 insert—

### **‘CHAPTER 3**

### **LAYING AND REPORTING FORMALITIES**

#### **Laying of guidelines**

**14A.** Guidelines under Chapter 1 must be laid before the Assembly by the Department of Education as soon as practicable after issuing or reissuing them.’

*Minister of Education*

#### **New Clause**

After clause 14 insert—

#### **‘Reporting on guidelines and costs**

**14B.**—(1) At least once every 3 years, the Department of Education must publish a report—

(a) setting out the Department’s plans for—

(i) reviewing (and revising) guidelines under Chapter 1, and

- (ii) guidelines under Chapter 1 to include provision, or to have no or altered provision, as to capping of expense, and
  - (b) containing broader information in accordance with the following subsections.
- (2) The report must—
- (a) summarise—
    - (i) as the Department’s best estimates, the typical or average costs of school uniforms and individual pieces of such uniforms, and
    - (ii) so far as known to the Department, the various factors contributing to such costs rising, remaining unchanged or becoming lower, and
  - (b) the Department’s assessment of the impact of provision as to capping of expense for the time being included in guidelines under Chapter 1.
- (3) The report must, if no provision as to capping of expense is for the time being included in guidelines under Chapter 1, state the Department’s explanation for this.
- (4) The report may reflect the distinctions, as appearing to the Department, between uniforms worn—
- (a) at particular types or descriptions of schools, or
  - (b) by pupils—
    - (i) in particular age or year groups, or
    - (ii) receiving primary education or secondary education as construed in accordance with Article 2(2) of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.’

*Minister of Education*