



School Uniform

What's your opinion about the
School Uniform?

School

Uniform

School

Uniform

School

Uniform

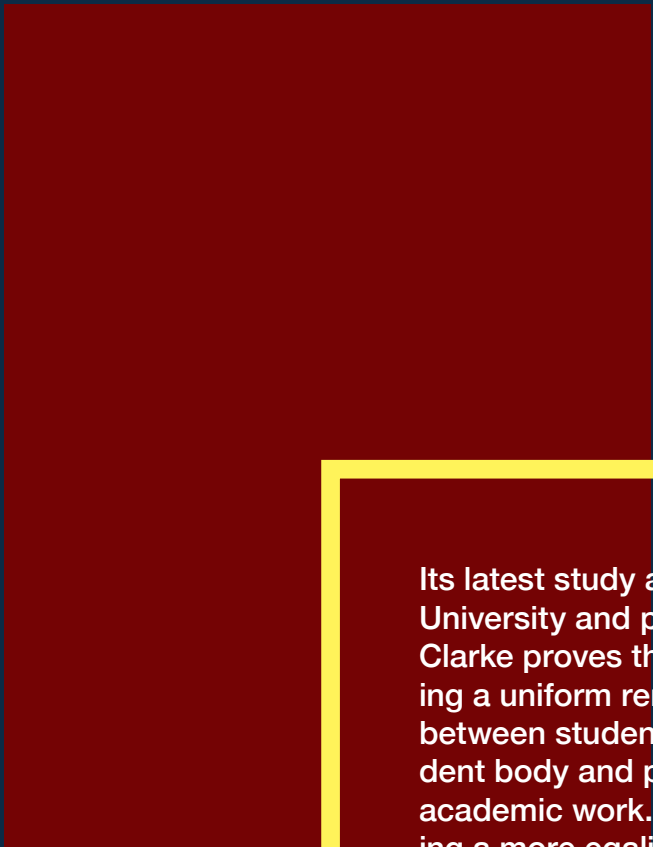
School

Uniform

School

Uniform

We passionately believe that a distinctive uniform has a hugely positive impact on a young person's journey through the school system.



Its latest study alongside Oxford Brookes University and psychologist Dr Barbie Clarke proves this point. It found that wearing a uniform removes points of difference between students, thus unifying the student body and providing greater focus for academic work. Uniforms - if not for creating a more egalitarian space - contribute significantly in student efficiency and productivity. As David explained: "A uniform also helps students to improve their academic concentration. Focus groups have found that many pupils chose to remain in their uniform outside of school to complete homework, to remain in the working mind-set." Think of your own Mufti Days, were they productive? Highly unlikely. The excitement of getting to wear your not-black, not-flat shoes is likely to have gone by lunch time but as The SA's research reveals your desire to get on with work is still not likely to have shown up. "While non-uniform days may be exciting, our research found that pupils viewed them as 'non-work' days, and teachers reported a drop in behaviour standards as a result," David added.

School uniform creates a level playing field among students, reducing peer pressure and bullying.

Of course, the use of a uniform is most pertinent in eradicating bullying. “Many students feel relieved that they do not have to follow the latest fashion trends in their appearance at school,” he explained. “As well as helping to reduce bullying, a uniform is central to fostering an egalitarian culture in schools. An official uniform places children from a range of backgrounds on a level footing from the first day at school, ensuring all have a fair start in their academic life.” Peer pressure can be a major cause of anxiety for the majority of young people, and a shared dresscode can help relieve this. “The SA knows that peer pressure is a major concern for young people, particularly those from a poorer socio-economic background, so a uniform is vital to ensure that all students are dressed in the same way and are treated equally by their peers,” David explained. When all students are dressed alike, competition between students over clothing choices and the teasing of those who are dressed in less expensive or less fashionable outfits can be eliminated. Research by the Schoolwear Association found that 83% of teachers thought “a good school uniform... could prevent bullying based on appearance or economic background.” Arminta Jacobson, Founder and Director of the Center for Parent Education at the University of North Texas, stated that uniforms put “all kids on the same playing field in terms of their appearance. I think it probably gives them a sense of belonging and a feeling of being socially accepted.”

School uniforms may improve attendance and discipline.

A study by researchers at the University of Houston found that the average absence rate for girls in middle and high school decreased by 7% after the introduction of uniforms. The study also found that “behavioral problems shift[ed] towards less severe infractions.” A Youngstown State University study of secondary schools in Ohio’s eight largest school districts found that school uniform policies improve rates of attendance, graduation, and suspension. During the first semester of a mandatory uniform program at John Adams Middle School in Albuquerque, NM, discipline referrals dropped from 1,565 during the first semester of the year prior to 405, a 74% decrease. Macquarie University (Australia) researchers found that in schools across the world where uniform policies are enforced, students “are more disciplined” and “listen significantly better, there are lower noise levels, and lower teaching waiting times with classes starting on time.”

School uniforms make getting ready for school easier, which can improve punctuality.

When uniforms are mandatory, parents and students do not spend time choosing appropriate outfits for the school day. According to a national survey, over 90% of US school leaders believe school uniform or formal dress code policies “eliminate wardrobe battles with kids,” make it “easier to get kids ready in the morning,” and create a “time saving in the morning.” Tracey Marinelli, Superintendent of the Lyndhurst School District in New Jersey, credited the district’s uniform policy for reducing the number of students running late. Lyndhurst student Mike Morreale agreed, stating that “it’s so much easier to dress than having to search for clothes and find out that something doesn’t match.”



School Uniforms are Necessary for Safety

School uniforms are vital for school safety in the 21st century -- this needs to be remembered in any school uniforms debate. School uniforms allow teachers and staff to quickly distinguish between students and strangers. These days, schools have to be especially vigilant about predators and those who want to invade the schoolyard to take advantage of vulnerable students. School uniforms make it easy to tell when there’s a strange, non-uniformed, and possibly unwanted stranger in the schoolyard. This is easily spotted in time for staff to take appropriate action to protect the children. Additionally, uniforms can also help teachers keep track of students on excursions and allow them to spot their students even in large crowds of people.

School uniforms keep students focused on their education, not their clothes.

A bulletin published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals stated that “When all students are wearing the same outfit, they are less concerned about how they look and how they fit in with their peers; thus, they can concentrate on their schoolwork.” A study by the University of Houston found that elementary school girls’ language test scores increased by about three percentile points after uniforms were introduced. Former US Secretary of State and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, advocated school uniforms as a way to help students focus on learning: “Take that [clothing choices] off the table and put the focus on school, not on what you’re wearing.” Chris Hammons, Principal of Woodland Middle School in Coeur d’Alene, ID, stated that uniforms “provide for less distraction, less drama, and more of a focus on learning.”

School Uniforms Create a Sense of Unity and Identity

School uniforms create a sense of identity and unity in a school. By having students dress the same way, you promote the idea that they are all part of something bigger than themselves individually. What's often overlooked in the school uniform debate is that uniforms often transform a school, from simply a place that students attend to something they are part of. Uniforms allow students give schools a visible identity -- something physical and real which students can look to and be proud of. Uniforms create a definitive idea of 'us' as opposed to them (them being students from other schools). Even though many students may outwardly hate wearing their uniform, they often take pride in it secretly, especially when confronted by students from other

schools. Even those school uniforms that are particularly bad can create a sense of common suffering among students. A student's education at the end of the day is a journey. Uniforms let them know that they are going through that journey with a cohort of their peers and that they aren't alone. This ultimately is a lesson and experience worth learning not only during one's schooling years, but for the entirety of their life.

It improves the social aspect among schoolchildren.

According to experts, uniforms have improved the social aspect in a school environment. Often, fashion and clothing could become the root of social conflict, where some children are ridiculed by their peers because of the way they dress. Many of them use clothing to define and express themselves, which often lead to the formation of cliques in schools. Also, students feel to be judged based on their clothing by others and even teachers and administrators. Well, uniforms are believed to have the capability to remove this trend, thus relieving students from the pressure of fitting in. Experts believe that an improved social environment through mandatory standardized dress can improve both academic and behavioral outcomes.

School uniforms may improve attendance and discipline.

A study by researchers at the University of Houston found that the average absence rate for girls in middle and high school decreased by 7% after the introduction of uniforms. The study also found that "behavioral problems shift[ed] towards less severe infractions." A Youngstown State University study of secondary schools in Ohio's eight largest school districts found that school uniform policies improve rates of attendance, graduation, and suspension. During the first semester of a mandatory uniform program at John Adams Middle School in Albuquerque, NM, discipline re-

ferrals dropped from 1,565 during the first semester of the year prior to 405, a 74% decrease. Macquarie University (Australia) researchers found that in schools across the world where uniform policies are enforced, students "are more disciplined" and "listen significantly better, there are lower noise levels, and lower teaching waiting times with classes starting on time."

It prevents bullying

School uniforms may act as a leveler between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, ranging from rich to poor. Uniforms ensure that all students wear the same thing no matter what their financial situation is. If students wore their everyday clothes, there may be a visibly obvious gap between what rich students wore and what poor students wore. When all students are dressed alike, competition between students over clothing choices and the teasing of those who are dressed in less expensive or less fashionable outfits can be eliminated. Research by the School-wear Association found that 83% of teachers thought "a good school uniform could prevent bullying based on appearance or economic background." Uniforms put all kids on the same playing field in terms of their appearance. It gives them a sense of belonging and a feeling of being socially accepted. Children may inevitably be bullied if they weren't able to keep up with the latest and often more expensive fashion trends. At school, all students should be seen as equal amongst their peers. Ensuring that children all wear the same uniform is one way to reach this goal. Students will find enough reasons to bully each other on their own -- we don't need to give them any more reasons.

Wearing uniforms enhances school pride, unity, and community spirit.



“A uniform is central to schools building a sense of community among students, staff and parents as well as the local community,” David explained. “We find that students are proud to represent their school in public through their clothes, and those students attending schools without a distinctive uniform saw a badged blazer as a way to improve their school’s reputation.”

Students’ legal right to free expression remains intact even with mandatory school uniforms.

The US Supreme Court case *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (7-2, 1969), which concerned the wearing of black armbands to protest the Vietnam War, confirmed that students’ constitutional right to free speech “does not relate to regulation of the length of skirts or the type of clothing.” Wearing one’s own choice of shirt or pants is not the “pure speech” protected by the Constitution. In

Canady v. Bossier Parish School Board, the US Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a school board’s right to implement a mandatory uniform policy, stating that requiring uniforms for the purpose of increasing test scores and improving discipline “is in no way related to the suppression of student speech. [Students] remain free to wear what they want after school hours. Students may still express their views through other mediums during the school day.” In 1995, Judge Michael D. Jones of Maricopa County Superior Court (AZ) ruled that mandatory uniform policies do not violate students’ free speech rights even when there is no opt-out provision in the school’s uniform policy.

School

School

School

School

School

Uniform

Uniform

Uniform

Uniform

Uniform



The issue has been around for a long time - notably brought into the mainstream public consciousness by Bill Clinton, during his presidency. His radio address on February 24, 1996, highlighted the need for a robust uniform policy in schools. Under his leadership, a Manual of School Uniforms was developed and circulated to every school district in the US. Schools have uniform policies to create unity in student dress and promote inclusiveness and safety. Despite these sensible motivations, critics of uniform policies often note mixed results on uniforms deterring violence. Furthermore, they point out, policies place limitations on freedom of expression and creativity. There are some valid arguments on why the idea of using school uniforms as a deterrent against gang-wars and violence is seriously flawed, and the impact it has on curbing the individuality and expressiveness of a child's personality.

By denying the
opportunity
to fully
express their
personality,
individualism
is unable
to develop
to its fullest
capacity.



School uniforms restrict students' freedom of expression.

The First Amendment of the US Constitution guarantees that all individuals have the right to express themselves freely. The US Supreme Court stated in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* that “it can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.” In the 1970 case *Richards v. Thurston* (3-0), which revolved around a boy refusing to have his hair cut shorter, the US First Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that “compelled conformity to conventional standards of appearance” does not “seem a justifiable part of the educational process.” Clothing choices are “a crucial form of self-expression,” according to the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada, which also stated that “allowing students to choose their clothing is an empowering message from the schools that a student is a maturing person who is entitled to the most basic self-deter-

mination.” Clothing is also a popular means of expressing support for various social causes and compulsory uniforms largely remove that option. Students at Friendly High School in Prince George’s County, MD, were not allowed to wear pink shirts to support Breast Cancer Awareness Month. As a result, 75 students received in-school suspensions for breaking the school’s uniform restrictions.

School uniforms promote conformity over individuality.

At a time when schools are encouraging an appreciation of diversity, enforcing standardized dress sends a contradictory message. Chicago junior high school student Kyler Sumter wrote in the *Huffington Post*: “They decide to teach us about people like Rosa Parks, Susan B. Anthony and Booker T. Washington. We learn about how these people expressed themselves and conquered and we can’t even express ourselves in the hallways.” Troy Shuman, a senior in Harford County, MD, said the

introduction of a mandatory uniform policy to his school would be “teaching conformity and squelching individual thought. Just think of prisons and gangs. The ultimate socializer to crush rebellion is conformity in appearance. If a school system starts at clothes, where does it end?” In schools where uniforms are specifically gendered (girls must wear skirts and boys must wear pants), transgendered, gender-fluid, and gender-nonconforming students can feel ostracized. Seamus, a 16-year-old transgendered boy, stated, “sitting in a blouse and skirt all day made me feel insanely anxious. I wasn’t taken seriously. This is atrocious and damaging to a young person’s mental health; that uniform nearly destroyed me.”

It hinders self-expression.

Some sociology experts and educators argue that requiring schoolchildren to wear uniforms would hinder their self-expression, which is an important part of child development. Also, they believe that that these

students would only find other less-appropriate ways to express themselves, such as inappropriate use of jewelry and make-up.

It can be uncomfortable.

School uniforms are uncomfortable to wear and impractical for learning. This is an argument raised in the debate against school uniforms by students having to wear them because the uniform may be made out of uncomfortable material. Students will claim also that they’re better off wearing their own clothes. Varying kinds of clothing normally feel comfortable to different people. Considering that some children are more comfortable in a specific style or material, uniforms would reduce their ability to choose clothes that fit their individual comfort needs. And for efficient learning, experts believe that schoolchildren should feel comfortable.



School uniform imposes an extra expense on families.

Keeping a child in school uniforms may be more expensive for parents than buying regular clothes would be. The rising cost of school uniforms risks “breaking the bank” for poorer families as more state schools demand costly branded items and local authorities cut clothing grants, a new report warns. The average cost of uniforms for boys is \$210 and for girls \$200. The average for a primary school outfit is \$148. School is already expensive enough, with parents having to pay for school excursions, books, stationary and transport. Adding the cost of often expensive school uniforms can make balancing the budget very difficult for many families, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. School uniforms could be made cheaper, but doing so may affect the quality and comfort of the clothing. When other equipment – everything from pencil cases to calculators and dictionaries – is taken into account, the cost climbs further. Often, uniforms are only available from a limited

number of suppliers and the lack of competition and captive market that keeps prices high. The Children’s Commission on Poverty (UK) found that over “95% of parents on low incomes reported difficulties in meeting school-related costs,” including uniforms, despite their children attending tuition-free schools. Anderson, IN, parents Laura and Scott Bell their children’s school over its uniform policy, saying the \$641 for their children’s uniforms broke the guarantee of a free public education. In York County, PA, a local NBC affiliate reported that some children were missing class because their families couldn’t afford to purchase the required uniforms.

School uniform can't stop the violence.

Tony Volk, PhD, Associate Professor at Brock University, stated, "Overall, there is no evidence in bullying literature that supports a reduction in violence due to school uniforms." A peer-reviewed study found that "school uniforms increased the average number of assaults by about 14 [per year] in the most violent schools." A Texas Southern University study found that school discipline incidents rose by about 12% after the introduction of uniforms. According to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office of Education Evaluation and Management, fights in middle schools nearly doubled within one year of introducing mandatory uniforms.

It infringe on Religious Freedom

School uniforms, as argued by religious organizations, may often lead to religious discrimination. These organizations may claim that, in turn, school uniforms infringe on a student's religious freedom. Because many faiths have quite specific dress standards which must be followed, school uniforms mean that many students aren't able to meet the dress standards of their particular faith. Often, due to the two codes of dress being contradictory, a student is forced to choose between following the school's rules and the rules of their faith. While it may be possible for there to be exceptions to the uniform rules, this can often create more problems. In fact, these exceptions may be even less equalizing -- for example, Islamic students' school uniforms mean that they are the only ones wearing something different and this can lead to isolation, bullying and cultural intolerance.

It delays children's transition into adulthood.

Teenagers need self-identification and expression to make the leap into adulthood, and by forcing them to wear school uniforms, they are limited with the ability to express themselves, which might delay their transition into adulthood.

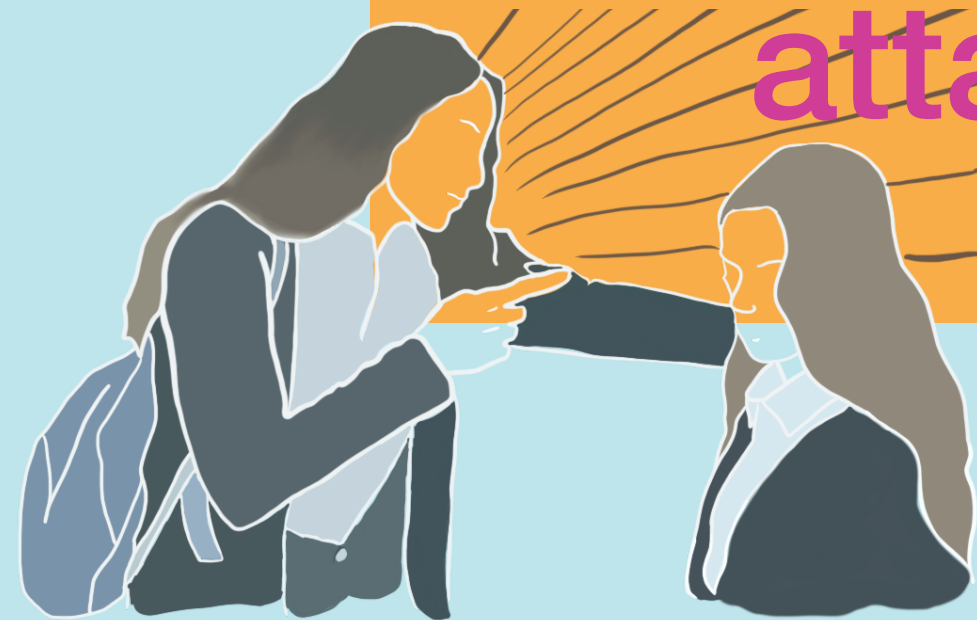
Uniforms may have a detrimental effect on students' self-image.

When students have to wear the same outfits, rather than being allowed to select clothes that suit their body types, they can suffer embarrassment at school. Child and teen development specialist Robyn Silverman told NBC News' Today that students, especially girls, tend to compare how each other looks in their uniforms: "As a body image expert, I hear from students all the time that they feel it allows for a lot of comparison. So if you have a body that's a plus-size body, a curvier body, a very tall body, a very short body, those girls often feel that they don't look their best." A study by researchers at Arizona State University found that "students from schools without uniforms reported higher self-perception scores than students from schools with uniform policies." Some students also find uniforms less comfortable than their regular clothes, which may not be conducive to learning.

School uniforms emphasize the socio-economic divisions they are supposed to eliminate.

Most public schools with uniform policies are in poor neighborhoods, emphasizing the class distinctions that uniforms were supposed to eliminate. Uniforms cannot conceal the differences between the "haves" and the "have-nots." David L. Brunsma, PhD, stated that "more affluent families buy more uniforms per child. The less affluent... they have one... It's more likely to be tattered, torn and faded. It only takes two months for socioeconomic differences to show up again." According to the Children's Society (UK), almost 800,000 pupils go to school in poorly fitted uniforms because their parents cannot afford new items. Uniforms also emphasize racial divisions. Schools with a minority student population of 50% or more are four times as likely to require uniforms than schools with a minority population of 20-49%, and 24 times more likely than schools with minority populations of 5%-19%.

School uniforms do not stop bullying and may increase violent attacks.



Dress

Dress

Dress

Dress

Dress

Codes

Codes

Codes

Codes

Codes



Dress Code

