



MERCHANT TAYLORS'
OXFORDSHIRE
ACADEMY TRUST



Aylesbury
UTC

UNIFORM POLICY

Version 1.0

January 2025

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AUTC FGB

Version Control	
Policy	Uniform Policy
SLT	JD
Reference	MTOAT AUTC Uniform Policy_Jan2025_FinalApp
Committee	AUTC FGB
Circulation	Website
Status	Approved
Version	March 2024: Based on the School Bus model with local adaptations.
Governing body approved	AUTC FGB: 25/06/24
Review cycle	Annually

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1. Statement of Intent

Aylesbury UTC believes that a consistent school uniform policy is vital for:

- Promoting the ethos of a school.
- Providing a sense of belonging and identity.
- Setting an appropriate tone for education.

For the purposes of this policy, “**uniform**” includes the following elements of students’ appearance:

- Clothing, including the school uniform itself, variations of the school uniform such as PE kits, and other clothing worn at school, e.g. non-uniform.
- Hairstyles and headwear.
- Jewellery and other accessories.
- Cosmetics such as makeup and nail polish.

This policy lays out the measures the school has taken to ensure a consistent, fair and inclusive uniform policy, and to implement a uniform that reflects the needs of all students, is affordable, and provides the best value for money for both the school and students’ families.

We believe that students learn most effectively and achieve their best outcomes when they are comfortable, able to be themselves, and dressed in a way that sets an appropriate tone for education.

In writing and updating this policy, we have sought to:

- Engage with parents and students.
- Consider how this policy might affect groups represented in the school, especially those who share protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- Consider how comfortable the uniform will be for students.
- Take a sensible approach to allow for exceptions to be made, e.g. during adverse weather.
- Ensure that the uniform is suitable and safe for students who walk or cycle to school.
- Choose a PE kit which is practical, comfortable, appropriate to the activity involved and affordable.
- Ensure the policy is easy to access and understand.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010

- Education Act 2011
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Act 2021
- DfE (2021) 'Cost of school uniforms'
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2024) 'School uniforms: guidance for schools'
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022) 'Preventing hair discrimination in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- MTOAT Complaints Policy
- AUTC Behaviour Policy
- AUTC Equality and Diversity Policy
- MTOAT Financial Procedures Manual

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Overseeing the process whereby the Principal, in consultation with the school community, establishes a practical and smart school uniform that accurately reflects the school's vision and values, in order to ensure:
 - The school's uniform is accessible, affordable, inclusive, and does not disadvantage any student because of their protected characteristics or socio-economic status.
 - Best value for money has been achieved and that the DfE's '**Cost of school uniforms**' guidance has been complied with.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Consulting with the school community to establish a practical and smart school uniform that is accessible and affordable and accurately reflects the school's vision and values.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of parents, students and the wider school community regarding changes to the school's uniform, and sharing recommendations with the governing body, where necessary.
- Ensuring that the school's uniform is accessible, inclusive, and does not disadvantage any student because of their protected characteristics or socio-economic status.
- Being able to demonstrate that the school's uniform represents the best value for money and that it complies with the DfE's '**Cost of school uniforms**' guidance.
- Processing and approving all eligible School Uniform Assistance Application Forms.
- Enforcing the school's uniform rules on a day-to-day basis.
- Ensuring that teachers understand this policy and what to do if a student is in breach of the policy.

- Providing students with an exemption letter as appropriate, e.g. for a student who has a broken arm and requires a loose-fitting shirt.

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that students dress in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Where appropriate to their role, disciplining students who are in breach of this policy.
- Ensuring that students understand why having a consistent and practical school uniform is important, e.g. school identity.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing their children with the correct school uniform as detailed in this policy.
- Informing the Principal if their child requires an exemption to the uniform rules for a period of time, with a reason why.
- Ensuring that their child's uniform is clean, presentable and the correct size.

Students are responsible for:

- Wearing the correct uniform at all times, unless the Principal has granted an exemption.
- Looking after their uniform as appropriate.
- Understanding and respecting why a school uniform is important to the school, e.g. school identity and community.

4. Cost Principles

The school will develop its uniform policy in relation to the following starting principles:

- The school will seek to ensure that the uniform is affordable. In so doing, the school will consider the total cost of school uniforms, taking into account all items of uniform or clothing parents will need to provide while their child is at the school.
- The school will seek to keep the use of branded items to a minimum.
- The school will seek to ensure that uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money, including the quality and durability of the garment.
- The school will seek to ensure that second-hand uniforms are available for parents to acquire. Information on second-hand uniforms will be published on the school's website, where available; parents can contact the school office for further information.

Principles in Practice

In accordance with the 'School Admissions Code', the Principal will ensure that the school's uniform requirements do not discourage parents from applying for a place for their child.

The school will assess the overall cost implications of its uniform policy regularly, including prior to making any changes to the school uniform. When evaluating whether costs are

reasonable and proportionate, the school will take into account the opinions and situations of:

- Economically disadvantaged parents.
- Parents with multiple children who are, or will be in the future, students at the school.
- Parents of younger children, as they are likely to grow quickly and require new sets of uniform more frequently.
- Parents of students with protected characteristics that may impact their ability to access the uniform.
- LAC and PLAC.

The school will evaluate the cost of its uniform based on the overall collection of uniform items that parents would need to purchase for a student, rather than on the cost effectiveness of individual items; this will include consideration of the fact that parents will need to purchase multiples of certain items, e.g. shirts and socks, to ensure their child can come to school in clean uniform every day.

The school will keep variations in school uniform for different groups of students, e.g. year group-specific items or house colours, to a minimum to ensure that students can get the most wear out of their uniform and that parents can pass some items down to younger siblings.

The school will keep branded uniform items to a minimal level that is reasonable for all members of the school community. The school defines a branded uniform item as any item of clothing that cannot be purchased at a range of retailers, e.g. supermarkets, due to the item's logo, colour, design, fabric or other unique element. Where the school requires an item of branded clothing, it will assess how prices can be kept as low as possible and put measures in place to facilitate this. This may include:

- Offering sew- or iron-on logo patches for blazers and jumpers that can be bought at non-specialist retailers, instead of requiring specific branded jumpers.
- Ensuring branded items are longer-lasting and unlikely to be worn out quickly, e.g. ties.
- Making donated second-hand uniform available for purchase at a lower price.

The school will meet the DfE's requirements and recommendations on costs and value for money. Care will be taken to ensure that school uniform is affordable for all current and prospective students, and that the best value for money is secured through reputable suppliers.

The school will work with multiple suppliers to obtain the best value for money possible. Any savings negotiated will be passed to parents where possible. The school will not enter into exclusive single-supplier contracts or cash-back arrangements. More information on supplier processes can be found in the **School Uniform Supplier** section of this policy.

The school will not make frequent changes to uniform requirements and will take the views of parents and students into account when considering any changes.

5. Equality Principles

The school takes its legal obligation to avoid unlawfully discriminating against any student very seriously.

In line with the above, the school will aim to ensure that its uniform policy is as inclusive as possible so that all students can access a school uniform which is comfortable, suitable for their needs, and reflects who they are, while avoiding any direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics or socio-economic status.

The school will ensure that parents and students are consulted over any changes to school uniform, and that, where appropriate and with students' consent, views and advice are sought specifically from students, and parents of students, who:

- Are transgender or non-binary.
- Are of a religious or cultural background that has specific dress requirements.
- Have SEND and/or sensory needs.

Parents' concerns and requests regarding school uniform and amendments to it are handled on a case-by-case basis by the Principal and governing body, and always in accordance with the trust's complaints policy.

Information on how the school ensures its uniform policy does not discriminate against students with specific protected characteristics is outlined below.

Gender

To avoid disproportionately impacting students of a certain gender, the school will ensure that the cost of uniform is as equal in price as possible across items for all genders.

This includes:

- Adhering to the procedures laid out in the '**Cost Principles**' section of this policy.
- Not directly requiring students of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by requiring female students to buy both trousers and skirts.
- Not indirectly requiring students of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by offering football in PE to only male students and requiring they buy football boots to participate.
- Not holding students of different genders to different uniform standards, e.g. by banning certain hairstyles for only one gender.

The school will implement a gender-neutral uniform, meaning that students will not be required to wear specific items based on their gender, and may wear any of the uniform items listed in the **School Uniform** section of this policy regardless of the legal sex recorded on the school's records. Transgender students are supported to access the uniform that best reflects their gender expression in line with the LGBTQ+ Policy.

Religion and Belief

To avoid disproportionately impacting students of a certain religion, belief or culture, the school will ensure that there is flexibility to allow students to present themselves in a way that adheres to their dress requirements as far as possible, within the school's uniform policy.

The school will endeavour to meet all requests for amendments to the uniform for these purposes; however, the needs and rights of individual students will be weighed against any health and safety concerns appropriate to the circumstances, e.g. if safety headgear needs to be worn.

Race

To avoid disproportionately impacting students of a certain race, the school will ensure that its uniform policy does not constitute unlawful indirect discrimination through blanket rules. This includes:

- Not banning hairstyles related to a student's ethnic origin, e.g. natural Afro hairstyles.
- Not banning hairstyles worn because of cultural, family and social customs, e.g. cornrows.
- Not banning head coverings related to a student's culture or ethnic origin, e.g. African heritage head wraps.

The school will follow the good practice guidance provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission on **Preventing hair discrimination in schools**.

SEND and Medical Conditions

To avoid disproportionately impacting students with SEND or medical conditions, the school will ensure its uniform policy takes into account the needs of these students. This includes:

- Ensuring the school uniform uses soft, stretchy fabrics and avoids intricate buttons or hard seams.
- Allowing variations to the standard uniform for students whose medical conditions may impact how they dress, e.g. students with casts who require loose-fitting clothing or students with hair loss-related conditions who wish to wear head coverings.

Where the needs of these students cannot be met in the standard uniform policy, individual adaptations to the uniform will be considered and permitted wherever possible.

The school will ensure that it works with a supplier that acts in accordance with the school's values and principles on equality and inclusion.

6. Complaints and Challenges

The school will endeavour to resolve all uniform complaints and challenges locally and informally, in accordance with the trust's complaints policy.

The school will refer individuals who wish to complain to the complaints policy and request that they follow the procedures outlined therein.

When a complaint is received, the school will work with the complainant to arrive at a mutually acceptable outcome.

The school has an agreed procedure in place with its uniform supplier to deal with complaints about the supply and quality of uniforms.

In considering a complaint, parents should be aware that teachers can sanction students for breaching the school's rules on appearance or uniform. The school expects this to be carried out in accordance with the school's published behaviour policy. The school aims to deal with student non-compliance in a proportionate and fair way.

7. School Uniform Supplier

The school's current school uniform supplier is:

BE Uniforms Newcastle, Office: Unit 4, Planet Business Centre, West Moor, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE12 6DY.

<https://www.border-embroideries.co.uk/schools/aylesbury-utc.html>

The school uniform supplier will accept school uniform assistance vouchers.

The school will retender the uniform contract every **five years**, whether changes to the uniform are made or not, in line with the MTOAT Financial Procedures Manual.

The governing body will be able to demonstrate how uniform is procured at the best value for money. The Principal will work to ensure that the items are procured as cheaply as possible without compromising on the quality, e.g. by requesting standard-style items from the supplier rather than more intricate and unique designs.

The school will not sign contracts with suppliers before requesting visualisations and samples of proposed uniform.

Parents will order uniform items direct from the supplier.

8. Finding and Consulting Suppliers

If the school is considering changing its suppliers and seeks a list of available suppliers, it will consider the following options:

- Consulting an industry body.
- Researching local suppliers.
- Consulting with other schools and networks.
- Having informal discussions with potential suppliers to help determine the school's own needs.

If the school prepares to request bids from potential suppliers, it will consider the following elements:

- What products parents will need.
- Existing contractual commitments.
- Length of tender process.
- The school's evaluation process.

9. Template Documents

Schools will use the DfE's **Procuring uniform supplies** template documents to ensure that they undergo the procurement process correctly. The templates consist of an invitation to tender, a request for quotation, and a pricing schedule.

Schools will use the invitation to tender template to ask questions of suppliers. Schools will then use the pricing schedule to ask suppliers to submit their prices. Full instructions on how to use the templates are included in each of the documents.

10. Uniform Assistance

The school will support disadvantaged families in meeting the costs of uniforms. School uniform assistance will be provided via a voucher worth **£30** that can be spent on school clothing. The budget for the school uniform assistance scheme will be derived from **pupil premium funds**.

For parents to claim school uniform assistance, their children should be eligible for **FSM**. Eligibility will be determined by checking original documents from the relevant authority, detailing receipt of the benefit and the address of the student.

Families who meet the criteria will be asked to complete a School Uniform Assistance Application Form and return it to the **school office**.

The school will hold second-hand school uniforms in the **school office** for parents to access; access to these uniforms will be made available upon request made to the Principal.

Parents will be invited to donate their child's uniform when they no longer need it.

11. Non-compliance

Staff will be permitted to discipline students for breaching this policy, where relevant to their role, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.

The Principal, or a person authorised by the Principal, will be permitted to ask a student to briefly go home to remedy breaches to the school's uniform. When deciding whether to allow a student to return home, the member of staff will consider the student's age and vulnerability, the length of time it will take, and the availability of the student's parents. A parent will always be contacted before sending the student home – if contact with the student's parent cannot be made, the student will remain in school.

Where a student has been sent home to rectify uniform breaches, the absence will be recorded as 'authorised'. If a student repeatedly breaches uniform rules, or takes longer than necessary to rectify the absence, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

Parents will be notified of students' breaches of school uniform in all cases.

12. School Uniform

Clothing

The school uniform is as follows:

Item	Optional or required	Branding	How to acquire	Cost per item from school supplier
Regular school uniform				
Navy blue polo shirt	Required	School logo on left-hand side	Branded polo shirt available from the school supplier or second-hand from school office.	£10.99 adult sizes £8.99 child sizes
Black hoodie	Required	School logo on left-hand side	Available from the school supplier or second-hand from school office. School logo on left-hand side	£23.99 zip up £14.99 pull over
Dark coloured trousers, black jeans, knee-length black shorts or knee-length dark skirt	Required	No branding	Available from regular retailers	N/A
Sensible, plain black shoes or black trainers	Required	No branding	Available from regular retailers	N/A
PE kit				
Plain blue t-shirt	Required	School logo on left-hand side	Available from school supplier	£15.00
Plain black shorts	Required	No branding	Available from regular retailers	N/A
Plain trainers	Required	No branding	Available from regular retailers	N/A

Leggings will not be permitted. Skin-tight clothing will not be permitted and shorts, trousers and shirts should be appropriate for the workplace.

The school will not consider high heels suitable school shoes; however, block heels of no more than **3cm** can be worn.

Jewellery

The school rules on jewellery are as follows:

- **One pair of stud earrings may be worn – no other piercings are permitted.**
- **A smart and sensible wrist watch may be worn.**

Students will be advised that jewellery is their personal responsibility and not that of the school. Lost or damaged items will not be refunded. All jewellery must be removed during practical lessons, including PE lessons and science experiments.

Bags

Students must use an appropriately-sized waterproof bag to carry their books and equipment. It must hold A4-sized workbooks comfortably without causing any damage.

School bags featuring inappropriate images, slogans or phrases will not be permitted.

The school will discourage students from bringing valuable bags to school. The school will not be liable for lost or damaged school bags.

Hairstyles and Headwear

The school reserves the right to make a judgement on whether a student's hairstyle, hair colour or headwear is inappropriate for the school environment; however, the school will ensure that any such judgements do not discriminate against any student by virtue of their protected characteristics. Each individual student's scenario will be taken into account where any judgements on appropriateness are to be made, and parents will always have the freedom to complain via the trust's complaints policy.

Students with long hair must ensure that this does not impede their vision, cover their face, or cause a health and safety risk. Long hair must be tied up during practical lessons, e.g. during PE.

The following hairstyles, hair colours and headwear are not considered appropriate for school:

- **Brightly-coloured dyed hair**
- **Headwear with bold patterns or colours**
- **Excessive hair accessories**
- **Headwear featuring inappropriate words or images**

Makeup and Cosmetics

The school rules on makeup and cosmetics are as follows:

- **Only natural-looking makeup is permitted**
- **False nails and nail extensions are not permitted**
- **Only clear nail varnish may be worn**

- **Temporary tattoos are not permitted**

Students wearing excessive makeup will be required to remove it.

13. Adverse Weather

All students will be advised to wear weather-appropriate clothing.

For hot temperatures, this includes wearing:

- **Tops that cover the shoulder area.**
- **Sunglasses with UV protection when outside.**

Students will be advised not to wear any hoodies during heatwaves. If outside during break times, students not wearing sun-safe clothing will be advised to stay in an area protected from the sun, or spare clothing is provided.

For cold temperatures, this includes wearing:

- **Scarfs, gloves, coats and hats when outside.**
- **Warm jumpers.**
- **Trousers, or skirts and thick tights.**

14. Labelling and Lost Property

Parents will be advised to ensure that all students' clothing and footwear is clearly labelled with their name and year group.

Any lost clothing will be taken to the lost property box in the **school office**. All lost property will be retained for **one month** and will be disposed of if it is not collected within this time.

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the chair of governors and the Principal. The school will engage with parents and students when reviewing this policy.

Any subsequent changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff, students, parents and other relevant stakeholders.