Uniform Policy

Academic year 2026 to 2027

Love • Respect • Service • Ambition

Review completed 26 October 2026. Next planned review October 2027, or earlier following relevant change.

Policy owner: Headteacher. Approval authority: Local Governing Body under the Trust scheme of delegation.

Status: Revised for approval. Approval date and effective date are to be recorded by the authorised body on ratification.

This edition updates the supplied policy for 2026–27. Existing legal duties apply irrespective of the policy approval date. Staff must follow current safeguarding and safety procedures while approval is completed.

Statement of intent

Sacred Heart Catholic Academy 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 pupils’ 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 pupils, is affordable, and provides the best value for money for both the school and pupils’ families.

We believe that pupils 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 pupils.
- 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 pupils.
- 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 pupils 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.

1. 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 and UK GDPR as amended, including applicable commenced provisions of the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Act 2021
- DfE ‘Cost of school uniforms’ (July 2026)
- DfE (2021) ‘School Admissions Code’
- DfE ‘Developing school uniform policy’ (current edition)
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022) ‘Preventing hair discrimination in schools’ This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Establishing, in consultation with the headteacher and school community, a practical and smart school uniform that accurately reflects the school’s vision and values.
- Ensuring that the school’s uniform is accessible, inclusive, and does not disadvantage any pupil because of their protected characteristics or socio- economic status.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of parents, pupils and the wider school community regarding changes to the school’s uniform.
- Ensuring that the school’s uniform is accessible and affordable.
- Demonstrating in this policy how best value for money has been achieved.
- Ensuring compliance with the DfE’s ‘Cost of school uniforms’ guidance.
- Processing and approving all eligible School Uniform Assistance Application Forms. The headteacher is responsible for:
- Enforcing the school’s uniform rules on a day-to-day basis.
- Ensuring that teachers understand this policy and what to do if a pupil is in breach of the policy.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of the school community in regard to the school’s uniform and making appropriate recommendations to the governing board.
- Providing pupils with an exemption letter as appropriate, e.g. for a pupil who has a broken arm and requires a loose-fitting shirt.

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that pupils dress in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Where appropriate to their role, disciplining pupils who are in breach of this policy.
- Ensuring that pupils 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 headteacher 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.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Wearing the correct uniform at all times, unless the headteacher 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.

3. 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.

Principles in practice In accordance with the 'School Admissions Code', the headteacher 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, pupils at the school.
- Parents of younger children, as they are likely to grow quickly and require new sets of uniform more frequently.
- Parents of pupils 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 pupil, 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 pupils, e.g. year group-specific items or house colours, to a minimum to ensure that pupils 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 grown out of quickly, e.g. ties.

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 pupils, 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.

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

4. Equality principles

The school takes its legal obligation to avoid unlawfully discriminating against any pupil 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 pupils 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 pupils are consulted over any changes to school uniform, and that, where appropriate and with pupils' consent, views and advice are sought specifically from pupils, and parents of pupils, 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 headteacher and governing board, and always in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

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

Gender To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils 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 pupils of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by requiring female pupils to buy both trousers and skirts.
- Not indirectly requiring pupils of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by offering football in PE to only male pupils and requiring they buy football boots to participate.
- Not holding pupils 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 pupils 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. Pupils who are gender-questioning will be supported sensitively, with safeguarding, equality and individual needs considered; uniform choices must not be used to pressure a pupil into a particular identity.

Religion and belief To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils of a certain religion, belief or culture, the school will ensure that there is flexibility to allow pupils 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 pupils 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 pupils 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 pupil'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 pupil'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 pupils with SEND or medical conditions, the school will ensure its uniform policy takes into account the needs of these pupils. This includes:

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

Where the needs of these pupils 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.

5. Complaints and challenges

The school will endeavour to resolve all uniform complaints and challenges locally and informally, in accordance with the school’s Complaints Procedures Policy.

The school will refer individuals who wish to complain to the Complaints Procedures 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 pupils 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 pupil non-compliance in a proportionate and fair way.

.

6. Non-compliance and support

Staff will first establish the reason for a uniform difficulty and offer practical support, loan items, reasonable adjustments or time to resolve supply and affordability problems. Do not sanction a pupil solely because their family cannot afford required items, because an agreed adjustment applies or because stock is unavailable.

Any sanction for a deliberate breach must be lawful, fair, proportionate and consistent with the Behaviour Policy, taking account of age, disability, SEND, religion, medical needs and safeguarding. Reflection or suspension is not automatic. A suspension can only be issued by the headteacher under the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy and its procedural safeguards.

The normal response is to keep the pupil safely in education while the issue is resolved. If the headteacher authorises a brief trip home to remedy uniform, contact parents first and assess travel, supervision, age and vulnerability. Do not send a pupil home if a safe arrangement cannot be made. Do not use this as an informal exclusion or allow repeated loss of learning. Any absence must be coded according to the attendance regulations and actual circumstances; it is not automatically authorised or unauthorised because of uniform or a repeat breach.

7. School uniform

Clothing

Compulsory and optional items are listed below.

- School-badged navy blazer and full-length school tie: compulsory branded items, subject to agreed transition or individual adjustments. The current school-approved design and transitional arrangements will be communicated to families; do not require premature replacement of serviceable permitted items.
- Pale blue school shirt or revere-collar blouse: generic, widely available. Grey full-length school trousers or knee-length grey skirt: generic; neither requires branding or a named supplier.
- Sensible black school shoes suitable for safe movement: generic. Trainers and boots are not standard classroom footwear unless an agreed adjustment applies. Socks or tights must be plain and appropriate to the uniform; no branding is required.
- PE kit: a plain navy T-shirt, plain navy shorts or tracksuit bottoms, suitable socks and trainers, plus appropriate footwear for particular activities where required. Branded school PE kit may be chosen but is optional. No pupil may be denied a lesson, club or activity for choosing the compliant generic alternative. Parents should ensure pupils bring PE kit when needed; staff will support pupils where cost, supply or additional needs create a barrier.

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. Pupils 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

Pupils 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 pupils 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 pupil'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 pupil by virtue of their protected characteristics. Each individual pupil'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 school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

Pupils 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 natural/nude nail varnish may be worn
- Temporary tattoos are not permitted

Pupils wearing excessive makeup will be required to remove it.

8. Labelling and lost property

Parents will be advised to ensure that all pupils' 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.

9. Branded items and affordability assurance

From 1 September 2026 the statutory cap is three compulsory branded uniform or PE items, or four in secondary schools where one is a tie. Count distinctive supplier-only colours, trims and designs, not just logos, across all compulsory lessons, clubs and activities in the school year. Optional branded items must have a genuine affordable generic alternative and must not be required in practice.

Under this policy the compulsory branded items are the school blazer and school tie. Branded PE clothing remains optional, with the generic alternative in section 7. No branded jumper, trousers, skirt, bag, coat or additional sports garment is compulsory. The school website and supplier lists must be aligned with this rule on approval.

Publish clear compulsory and optional lists, second-hand access and assistance arrangements. Families can contact the school office confidentially for help with uniform and equipment. The headteacher will arrange reasonable transition support and temporary flexibility for affordability, supply, medical, disability or religious reasons. Governors will review cost, supplier arrangements, equality impact and compliance annually and before any change. Procurement must follow applicable law and Trust procedures; do not impose costs to exhaust the legal cap.

Review sources and related guidance

Cost of school uniforms updated July 2026

Developing school uniform policy

Guidance checked on 26 October 2026. Use the current version on the official source page and review this policy sooner if relevant requirements change.