



St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

School Uniform Policy

Updated October 2026

Approved by	Local Governing Committee
Last reviewed	October 2026
Next review due	October 2027

This version reflects the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, Department for Education uniform guidance updated 6 July 2026, the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

1. Aims

Our school uniform supports the Catholic ethos and identity of St Matthew's, promotes belonging and equality, and provides practical clothing for learning. This policy aims to:

- set clear, inclusive and proportionate expectations for uniform and appearance;
- ensure uniform is affordable and represents best value for money;
- comply with the legal limit on compulsory branded items from 1 September 2026;
- avoid unlawful discrimination and make reasonable adjustments where required;
- support attendance and participation so that uniform is not a barrier to education or school activities; and
- set out how families can access support and second-hand uniform.

2. Legal framework and statutory guidance

This policy has regard to the Education Act 1996, as amended by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026; the Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Act 2021; Department for Education statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms (updated 6 July 2026); Department for Education guidance on developing school uniform policy (updated 6 July 2026); the Equality Act 2010; and the Human Rights Act 1998.

From 1 September 2026, a primary school may not require a pupil to have more than three different compulsory branded items of school uniform across the school year. For this purpose, school uniform includes clothing and bags required for school, travel to or from school, and any lesson, club, activity or event facilitated by the school. An item is branded where it carries the school name or logo, or where a distinctive colour, design, fabric or other characteristic means it is available only from particular suppliers.

3. Equality, inclusion and reasonable adjustments

The school will apply this policy fairly and consistently. When developing and implementing uniform requirements, the school will consider the relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including sex, race, religion or belief, disability, gender reassignment and pregnancy, and will comply with its wider Human Rights Act obligations.

The school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils where required and will consider individual variations or adaptations where necessary to avoid unlawful discrimination. This may include flexibility for pupils with SEND, sensory needs, medical conditions, religious or cultural requirements, or other individual circumstances.

Uniform choices are not restricted by sex. Pupils may choose from the permitted items in this policy. Requests relating to religion or belief, disability, medical needs, hair, cultural requirements or other protected characteristics will be considered sensitively, reasonably and on an individual basis. Families should contact the Headteacher to discuss an adjustment.

Hair and appearance requirements will be applied in a way that avoids race discrimination and hair discrimination. The school will not prohibit natural Afro-textured hair or protective hairstyles associated with race, culture or religion. Any restriction will be based on a clear, proportionate reason such as health, safety, safeguarding or the effective running of the school.

4. Affordability and limiting the cost of uniform

Cost and value for money are a high priority. Uniform should never prevent a family from applying to the school, a pupil from attending, or a pupil from participating in PE, trips, clubs or other school activities.

- The school will keep compulsory branded items to the legal maximum of three or fewer and keep optional branded items to a minimum.
- Generic alternatives will be permitted wherever the policy describes an item as optional or unbranded, enabling parents to shop across a range of retailers.
- The school will consider the individual and total cost of compulsory items, including PE kit, and avoid unnecessarily expensive specifications.
- The school will avoid additional uniform requirements for extra-curricular activities wherever possible and may loan items when appropriate.
- Significant changes will be consulted on with parents and pupils, and the financial impact of any change will be minimised.
- Second-hand uniform will be freely accessible to all families, and information about obtaining it will be published on the school website.
- Where financial hardship affects compliance, the school will work sensitively with the family and consider available support before any disciplinary response.

5. School uniform

5.1 Everyday uniform

Compulsory branded item 1 and 2: St Matthew's navy-blue sweatshirt or cardigan with the school logo and light blue polo shirt with the school logo.

- **Light blue polo shirt and jumper with school logo.**
- **Summer option: blue and white gingham dress.**
- **Grey or white socks or tights.**
- **Black sensible school shoes. Trainers or trainer-style shoes are not part of the everyday uniform.**
- **Boots may be worn for travel during inclement weather but should be changed indoors.**
- **A St Matthew's navy coat may be offered as an optional item. A suitable generic coat is equally acceptable.**

5.2 PE kit

Compulsory branded item 3: St Matthew's blue PE T-shirt with school logo.

- **Plain navy-blue shorts.**
- **Plain navy-blue jogging bottoms or other suitable plain navy sports bottoms, without prominent sports branding.**
- **Trainers.**
- **For colder weather, a plain navy sweatshirt or suitable plain navy sports top may be worn. The school sweatshirt/cardigan may also be worn, but families are not required to buy an additional branded top.**
- **Long hair must be secured safely for PE.**

The school therefore requires no more than three compulsory branded items under this policy. Any additional school-branded items offered for sale are optional and an equivalent generic item will be accepted where appropriate.

5.3 Swimming kit

- Suitable one-piece swimsuit or suitable swimming trunks/shorts that are appropriate for swimming.
- Towel.
- Swimming cap where required by the swimming provider.
- Swimming goggles are optional.
- Reasonable adaptations to swimwear will be considered for religious, cultural, medical, SEND or disability-related needs.

6. Jewellery, watches, hair and appearance

For safety, pupils should not wear jewellery at school, including earrings. A conventional watch may be worn. Smart watches or Smart glasses are not permitted.

If an item cannot be removed for a protected-characteristic, medical or other significant reason, the school will consider an individual adjustment and risk assessment rather than applying a blanket response.

Hair should be safe and suitable for school activities, and long hair should be tied back where needed for safety. The school expects appearance to be appropriate for a primary-school setting. Any concern about a hairstyle or appearance will be considered proportionately and consistently, taking account of equality, cultural and religious considerations. Parents are encouraged to speak to the school if unsure.

7. Purchasing uniform and second-hand provision

Branded uniform is currently available from Emblematic: <https://studentuniform.co.uk/smmps192/>. PE kit is currently available from Total Sport: <https://totalsport.co.uk/product-category/school-college-wear/primary-schools/st-matthews-rc-primary/>. Generic items may be purchased from any retailer provided that they meet the published colour and style requirements.

Free second-hand uniform is available from the school foyer. The school will make this provision accessible to current and prospective families and will publish clear information about it on the school website. Families are encouraged to donate clean, serviceable uniform that is no longer required.

Where the school enters into arrangements for branded uniform, the governing body will give the highest priority to cost and value for money, including quality, durability and sustainability. Written supplier arrangements will be reviewed regularly and single-supplier contracts will be avoided unless appropriate competitive tendering secures best value. Contracts should be re-tendered at least every five years.

8. Expectations and support

8.1 Pupils

Pupils are expected to wear the correct uniform while on the school premises, travelling to and from school, and at school-organised events or trips where uniform is required. Pupils should speak to a member of staff if they need support or an adjustment.

8.2 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are asked to provide uniform and PE kit that is clean, in good condition and clearly named, and to contact the school promptly if cost, disability, SEND, medical, religious, cultural or other circumstances make compliance difficult. The school will seek a supportive and practical solution.

8.3 Staff

Staff will apply the policy fairly, consistently and sensitively. Uniform concerns will normally be addressed through supportive conversations and opportunities to resolve the issue. Staff will consider whether non-compliance is linked to financial hardship, attendance, SEND, disability, a medical need, religion or belief, or another circumstance outside the pupil's control before further action is taken.

Where a uniform breach is treated as a behaviour matter, any response will be proportionate and in accordance with the school's published Behaviour Policy. A pupil should not be prevented from accessing education simply because a family is experiencing difficulty obtaining uniform.

8.4 Governors

The Local Governing Committee will monitor the policy, affordability, equality and supplier arrangements. It will ensure that the policy remains clear, inclusive, practical and safe, that the statutory branded-item limit is met, and that parents and pupils are engaged where significant changes are proposed.

9. Attendance, weather and individual circumstances

Uniform should support attendance, not create a barrier to it. The school may make short-term or individual adjustments where these support attendance or participation. Sensible flexibility may also be introduced during extreme or adverse weather, taking account of relevant weather-health advice and pupil safety.

10. Concerns and complaints

Parents and carers should raise uniform concerns, requests for adjustments or affordability issues with the Headteacher in the first instance. The school will seek to resolve concerns locally and reasonably. Formal complaints will be considered under the school's Complaints Policy.

11. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the senior leadership team and approved by the Local Governing Committee. It will also be reviewed sooner if legislation or Department for Education guidance changes, or if monitoring indicates that an aspect of the policy is creating an unintended equality, attendance, participation or affordability barrier.

12. Links to other school policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

13. Key external guidance

- Department for Education, Cost of school uniforms: statutory guidance (updated 6 July 2026).
- Department for Education, Developing school uniform policy (updated 6 July 2026).
- Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, section 35 (school uniforms: limits on branded items).