St. Joseph's Catholic Academy



Uniform Policy

Published Date: September 2026

Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust

Policy details

Approved by:	Local Governing Committee
Last reviewed on:	September 2026
Next review due by:	September 2027

St Joseph's Catholic Academy

School Uniform and Appearance Policy

1. Overview

At St Joseph's Catholic Academy, we believe that school uniform plays an important role in promoting our ethos, creating a sense of belonging and identity, setting high expectations and ensuring that students feel part of our school community.

The Department for Education recognises that school uniform can promote the ethos of a school, provide pupils with a sense of belonging and identity and set an appropriate tone for education. It also recognises that uniform can act as a social leveller and reduce pressure on pupils to wear the latest fashions or expensive clothing.

The Academy therefore expects high standards of personal appearance and expects students to wear the correct school uniform:

- On the school premises
- Travelling to and from school
- During the school day
- At school-organised activities and events where uniform is required
- When representing the Academy

The dress and appearance expectations are designed to ensure that students are smart, safe and ready to learn.

Fashion trends should not determine how school uniform is worn. Where parents or carers are uncertain whether an item complies with the policy, they are encouraged to contact the Academy before purchasing it.

2. Affordability and Value for Money

St Joseph's Catholic Academy recognises its responsibility to ensure that school uniform is affordable and represents good value for money.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance requires schools and governing boards to have regard to the cost of school uniform and places particular emphasis on affordability and value for money.

From September 2026, secondary schools must limit compulsory branded items of school uniform and PE kit to **three items, or four where one of those items is a tie**.

At St Joseph's Catholic Academy, the compulsory branded items are:

1. St Joseph's branded grey blazer

2. St Joseph's school tie

Branded PE items are available, but students may purchase the specified plain, non-branded alternatives. They are therefore not compulsory branded items.

We will:

- Keep compulsory branded items to a minimum.
- Ensure uniform is available at a reasonable cost.
- Consider the overall cost of uniform to families.
- Provide generic alternatives wherever appropriate.
- Avoid unnecessary changes to uniform requirements.
- Avoid different uniform requirements for different year groups or Houses where these would create unnecessary additional costs.
- Ensure parents can purchase the majority of uniform items from a range of retailers.
- Provide opportunities for families to access pre-loved uniform.
- Review supplier arrangements with cost and value for money as key considerations.
- Consider quality, durability and sustainability alongside price.

This reflects current DfE guidance that schools should minimise branded items, consider the affordability of individual items as well as overall uniform cost, and make second-hand uniform arrangements accessible to parents.

3. Support with School Uniform Costs

The Academy is committed to ensuring that no student is disadvantaged due to financial hardship.

Families experiencing difficulty purchasing school uniform are encouraged to contact the Academy in confidence.

Support may include:

- Access to pre-loved or second-hand uniform
- Support through hardship funding where available
- Signposting to external financial assistance
- Practical support to enable students to meet uniform expectations

Information about accessing pre-loved uniform will be made available to parents and carers.

The DfE requires opportunities to acquire second-hand uniform to be freely accessible to parents and information about these arrangements to be published for both current and prospective families.

4. Equality, Inclusion and Reasonable Adjustments

St Joseph's Catholic Academy is committed to ensuring that its uniform expectations are fair and inclusive.

The Academy recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will consider reasonable adjustments or adaptations where appropriate, including in relation to disability, medical needs, SEND, religion or belief and other protected characteristics. The DfE specifically identifies equality obligations as one of the considerations governing boards should take into account when developing or reviewing uniform policies.

Reasonable adjustments may include, where appropriate:

- Adapted footwear
- Adaptations to clothing
- Medical jewellery
- Sensory adaptations
- Approved religious dress
- Other individual adjustments arising from disability, SEND or medical needs

A reasonable adjustment does not reduce the Academy's overall expectation of high standards. Instead, it enables an individual student to meet those expectations in a way that takes account of their individual circumstances.

Parents and carers wishing to request an adjustment should contact their child's Head of House.

SEND and Medical Needs

We recognise that some students may experience barriers to particular elements of the uniform policy because of SEND, disability or a medical condition.

Individual arrangements will therefore be considered sensitively and, where appropriate, in consultation with:

- The student
- Parents or carers
- The SENDCO
- Pastoral staff
- Relevant medical or other professionals

5. School Uniform (Years 7 to 11)

Students must be dressed appropriately in full school uniform.

Compulsory Uniform

- Grey blazer branded with the St Joseph's logo
- School tie with blue and gold diagonal stripes
- Plain white shirt which buttons to the neck
- Plain black formal school trousers **or** the approved plain black drop-waisted skirt with box pleats
- Black opaque tights or black/dark grey socks
- Plain black formal school shoes
- An appropriate school bag suitable for carrying books, planner and equipment

Optional Items

- Plain black V-neck knitted jumper with no fashion logo or visible branding
- Plain black belt with a discreet buckle

Blazer

The school blazer should be worn as part of the normal school uniform unless students have been given permission by the Academy not to wear it, for example during periods of exceptionally warm weather.

Shirt

Shirts must:

- Be plain white
- Button to the neck
- Be fastened appropriately
- Be tucked into trousers or skirts

Tie

The school tie must be:

- Fastened correctly at the neck
- Worn at an appropriate length
- Clearly visible
- Worn throughout the school day unless permission has been given otherwise

Very short ties do not meet the Academy's uniform expectations.

A clip-on tie is recommended.

Trousers

Trousers must be plain black formal school trousers.

The following are not permitted:

- Jeans or denim-style trousers
- Leggings
- Lycra or stretch fashion trousers
- Jogging bottoms
- Fashion-style trousers
- Trousers with prominent zips, decorative accessories or fashion detailing

Skirts

Skirts must be:

- Plain black
- Drop-waisted with box-style pleats
- Worn at an appropriate school length, with the expectation that the skirt is approximately knee length

Lycra, bodycon, stretchy pull-on or other fashion-style skirts are not permitted.

6. Footwear

Students must wear plain black formal school shoes.

The following are not permitted:

- Trainers
- Canvas shoes
- Converse-style footwear
- Nike Air Force 1-style footwear or similar fashion trainers
- Ugg-style boots
- Fashion boots
- Footwear with prominent logos, colours or fashion detailing

We encourage parents to consider shoes which provide appropriate protection during poor weather, particularly for students walking to school.

In exceptional weather circumstances, the Academy may temporarily adapt footwear expectations where appropriate.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where a student requires alternative footwear due to disability, SEND or a medical condition.

7. Outdoor Clothing

Outdoor coats should be appropriate for the weather and suitable for school.

Coats must be removed on entering the school building and should not normally be worn inside.

Hoodies, hooded sweatshirts and tracksuit tops are not part of the school uniform and should not be worn as a replacement for appropriate outdoor clothing.

Hats should not normally be worn inside the Academy building.

8. Hair and Appearance

Students' hair should be neat, tidy and appropriate for a professional learning environment.

The following are not permitted:

- Unnaturally coloured hair
- Shaved patterns, lines or designs in hair
- Lines, patterns or designs shaved into eyebrows
- Extreme hairstyles, symbols, words or other styles that are likely to cause distraction or draw undue attention
- Hairstyles that are not appropriate for a professional school environment

The Academy will apply these expectations fairly and sensitively and will consider religious, cultural, SEND, disability and medical needs when applying this section.

9. Make-up, False Eyelashes and Nails

Make-up is not permitted for students in Years 7 to 11.

Students arriving at school wearing make-up will be expected to remove it.

The following are also not permitted:

- False eyelashes
- False nails or nail extensions
- Coloured nail varnish
- Highly visible cosmetic products

Where a student repeatedly does not meet these expectations, the Academy's behaviour procedures may be applied.

Staff will deal with concerns discreetly and respectfully.

Adjustments will be considered where necessary because of a medical condition, disability or other individual need.

10. Jewellery, Piercings and Smart Watches

Jewellery is not permitted in the Academy unless an agreed exemption or reasonable adjustment is in place.

This includes:

- Earrings
- Necklaces
- Bracelets
- Rings
- Facial piercings
- Tongue piercings
- Charity wristbands

Standard wrist watches are permitted.

Smart watches or other wearable devices capable of accessing messaging, social media or internet services are not permitted.

Students wishing to have piercings should do so at the beginning of the summer holiday so that removal is possible when returning to school. Covering piercings with plasters is not accepted as an alternative to removing jewellery. The Academy cannot make exceptions for newly pierced ears during term time.

Where jewellery has to be worn for medical or religious reasons, parents/carers should contact the Academy so that appropriate arrangements can be agreed.

11. Tattoos

Students should not display tattoos in school.

Under the Tattooing of Minors Act 1969, it is an offence to tattoo a person under the age of 18 except where it is performed for medical reasons by an appropriately qualified medical practitioner.

Where the Academy becomes aware of a safeguarding concern relating to a pupil obtaining a tattoo while under the age of 18, this may be considered in accordance with the Academy's safeguarding procedures.

12. PE Kit

Students must bring appropriate kit and equipment for PE lessons.

PE Kit

Students should wear:

- Royal blue polo shirt

- Black sports shorts, black sports leggings or black jogging bottoms
- Black sports socks
- Appropriate running-style trainers suitable for PE activities

St Joseph's branded versions of these items are available. However, **parents are not required to purchase branded PE items**.

Plain non-branded alternatives may be purchased from high-street retailers, supermarkets or online.

Optional PE Items

Students may also wear:

- St Joseph's branded tracksuit bottoms or plain black non-branded jogging bottoms
- St Joseph's branded leggings or plain black sports leggings
- St Joseph's branded quarter-zip top or plain royal blue non-branded quarter-zip top

Students do not need to purchase shorts, leggings **and** jogging bottoms. Families should select the option which best suits the student's needs and preferences.

Students taking part in the Football Academy may wear the approved Football Academy kit, as authorised by the PE Department, for PE lessons and are not required to purchase additional branded PE kit.

Fashion trainers, including flat-soled Converse-style or Air Force 1-style trainers, are not appropriate for PE.

Providing generic alternatives to branded PE items supports the DfE expectation that branded items are kept to a minimum and that uniform requirements remain affordable.

13. Hydration and water bottles

Students are strongly encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle to school each day. Drinking water is available from designated refill stations located throughout the Academy and may be accessed at appropriate times during the school day.

14. Where to Purchase School Uniform

The following compulsory branded items can be purchased from approved uniform suppliers:

- St Joseph's branded blazer
- School tie

Uniform Providers

- JK Clothing
- Little Gems / The School Outfit
- Tots to Teams

The following generic items may be purchased from any appropriate retailer, including supermarkets and high-street stores:

- Plain white shirt
- Plain black formal school trousers
- Approved style plain black skirt
- Plain black V-neck knitted jumper
- Plain black belt
- Plain black formal school shoes
- Socks and tights

Parents should check the requirements within this policy before purchasing items described by retailers as "school uniform", as not every item marketed as school uniform will necessarily meet the Academy's requirements.

PE Kit Supplier

Branded PE kit can be purchased from:

- Total Sport North East

Parents are reminded that branded PE items are optional and the equivalent plain non-branded items described within this policy are acceptable.

15. Expectations for Students

Students are responsible for:

- Arriving at school in the correct uniform
- Wearing uniform correctly throughout the school day
- Maintaining high standards of personal appearance
- Bringing the appropriate PE kit when required
- Having the equipment required for lessons
- Responding appropriately when a member of staff asks them to correct their uniform

Students should speak to their Head of House if they believe they require an adjustment to the uniform policy.

16. Expectations for Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Support the Academy's uniform and appearance expectations
- Ensure their child has the correct uniform and PE kit
- Check the policy before purchasing uniform items
- Contact the Academy if they are experiencing financial difficulties
- Contact the Academy where their child requires a reasonable adjustment
- Work with the Academy to address any repeated concerns regarding uniform

Parents are asked not to purchase alternative items on the assumption that they will be acceptable. Where there is uncertainty, parents should contact the Academy before purchasing.

17. Expectations for Staff

All staff have a responsibility for maintaining consistently high expectations.

Staff will:

- Model and reinforce the Academy's expectations
- Challenge uniform issues consistently
- Give students the opportunity to correct minor uniform issues
- Refer repeated or deliberate non-compliance through the Academy's behaviour procedures
- Take account of agreed reasonable adjustments
- Avoid publicly embarrassing students when addressing personal appearance
- Report concerns to the relevant pastoral leader where appropriate

Heads of House and pastoral staff will support consistent application of the policy across the Academy.

18. Responding to Uniform Concerns

The Academy's approach to uniform is based on **high expectations, consistency and support**.

Where a student does not meet uniform expectations, staff will ordinarily give the student the opportunity to correct the issue.

Depending upon the circumstances, this may include:

- Correctly adjusting their tie, shirt or blazer
- Removing make-up
- Removing unauthorised jewellery
- Removing an unauthorised item of clothing
- Borrowing appropriate uniform where this is available
- Contacting parents or carers where an issue cannot immediately be resolved

Repeated or deliberate breaches of uniform expectations may result in sanctions in accordance with the Academy's Behaviour Policy.

When responding to concerns, staff will consider whether there may be:

- A financial difficulty
- SEND or sensory need
- Disability
- Medical need
- Religious or cultural consideration
- Safeguarding or welfare concern
- Other exceptional circumstances

Where one of these circumstances applies, the priority will be to understand the barrier and work with the student and family to find an appropriate solution.

Any sanctions applied as a result of non-compliance will be in accordance with the Academy's Behaviour Policy.

19. Confiscation of Unauthorised Items

Where an unauthorised item such as jewellery is worn in school, the student may be required to remove it.

Items may be confiscated and retained in accordance with the Academy's Behaviour Policy.

Where repeated incidents occur, parents/carers may be contacted, and further sanctions may be applied.

20. Sixth Form Dress Code

St Joseph's Sixth Form provides a professional learning environment that supports students in preparing for higher education, employment and adult life. As senior members of the school community, Sixth Form students are expected to demonstrate high standards of conduct, personal presentation and professionalism, acting as positive role models for younger students.

Students are expected to wear smart business dress that is appropriate for a professional educational setting. Students must also wear their purple lanyard everyday.

Sixth Form Dress Expectations

Students should wear smart business dress in neutral tones.

Examples of neutral tones include black, white, grey, navy blue, cream and pale pink.

Acceptable Items

The following items are acceptable:

- Smart jumper or cardigan without large logos or prominent branding.
- Tailored trousers.
- Skirt, dress or pinafore of an appropriate length.
- Smart shirt, blouse or polo shirt.
- Smart shoes or boots, including flat or low-heeled shoes.
- A tie of the student's choice.
- Outdoor coats that are suitable for school and do not display offensive slogans, inappropriate images or excessive branding.

All students must wear smart shoes whilst attending Sixth Form. Leisure footwear and sports footwear should only be worn during approved sporting activities.

Unacceptable Items

The following items are not permitted:

- Trainers, canvas shoes, flip-flops, Crocs, Converse-style footwear or Ugg-style footwear.
- Denim clothing.
- Casual sportswear, including football shirts, tracksuits, joggers and hoodies.
- Shorts, leggings, jeans or trousers that resemble jeans.
- Low-cut tops, vest tops or other clothing unsuitable for a professional educational environment.
- Hats or baseball caps worn indoors.
- Extreme fashions or hairstyles that are inconsistent with the standards expected within the Academy.

When determining the suitability of an item, the Academy will consider whether it reflects the professional standards expected within a Sixth Form setting.

Sports Wear

If students have a practical sports lessons, they must wear plain black sports wear with no large logos, no spaghetti straps, no belly tops, no football tops. If students are sports leaders, they will be provided with a purple 'Sports Ambassador' hoodie to wear during events.

Identification and Safeguarding

All Sixth Form students will be issued with a Sixth Form lanyard and photographic identification badge. These must be worn and clearly visible at all times whilst on the Academy site. This requirement forms part of the Academy's safeguarding and site security arrangements.

Non-Compliance

Students who do not meet the Sixth Form dress code expectations may be required to amend their dress immediately where possible. Where this is not possible, students may be required to return home to change, subject to appropriate safeguarding arrangements, or alternative arrangements may be made by the Head of Sixth Form.

Persistent or deliberate failure to meet the Sixth Form dress code may be addressed in accordance with the Academy's behaviour and Sixth Form procedures.

21. Religious and Cultural Dress

The Academy respects the religious and cultural needs of its students and families.

Requests relating to religious or cultural dress will be considered fairly and sensitively, having regard to:

- Equality duties
- Health and safety
- Safeguarding
- Teaching and learning
- The Academy's Catholic ethos
- The individual circumstances of the student

Parents and carers should contact the relevant Head of House to discuss individual requirements.

22. Expectations for Governors

The governing board will ensure that the policy:

- Is appropriate for the Academy's context
- Is implemented fairly
- Takes account of the views of students and parents
- Supports equality and inclusion
- Is practical and safe
- Gives high priority to affordability and value for money
- Minimises compulsory branded items
- Supports access to second-hand uniform
- Meets relevant statutory requirements and DfE guidance

The governing board will also keep uniform supplier arrangements under review.

Current DfE guidance states that governing boards should give high priority to cost and be able to demonstrate how best value for money has been achieved when developing or reviewing uniform policy.

23. Student and Parent Voice

The Academy recognises the importance of engaging students and parents when reviewing its uniform arrangements.

Views may be gathered through:

- Parent consultation
- Student voice
- School Council
- Parent feedback
- Governor consultation
- Formal complaints and representations

The DfE states that schools should engage with parents and pupils when developing their uniform policy.

24. Complaints

Concerns relating to the application of this policy should initially be raised with the student's Head of House.

Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, parents and carers may use the Academy's published Complaints Policy.

Any concern involving discrimination, SEND, disability, medical need or a protected characteristic will be considered carefully and individually.

25. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Academy and governing board.

The review will consider:

- Affordability
- Value for money
- Changes to statutory guidance
- Equality and inclusion
- SEND and reasonable adjustments
- Feedback from students and parents
- Supplier arrangements

- Availability of second-hand uniform
- Consistency of implementation
- Any unintended impact on particular groups of students

The policy will be published on the Academy website and made available to existing and prospective parents. Current DfE guidance states that uniform policies should be published online, easily understood and clear about which items are compulsory and which are optional.

Reference

This policy has been reviewed with regard to the Department for Education's **Cost of school uniforms statutory guidance, updated 6 July 2026**, alongside the DfE's non-statutory school uniform guidance.

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