

**SAINT CATHERINE'S
COLLEGE
ARMAGH**



UNIFORM POLICY

2026/27

First devised August 2026

1. INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND

1.1. This is the uniform policy of Saint Catherine's College and applies to all pupils in Key Stage 3, 4 and Sixth Form, including all pupils, boys and girls, in Coláiste Chaitríona. It applies equally to all pupils, irrespective of their sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, religion/belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.

Any requests for exceptions to be made on the grounds of religion, race or a medical condition will be considered.

1.2. This policy is published via the school app and is also available in hard copy on request from the school office.

1.3. This policy is reviewed every 3 years and communicated annually to parents and pupils via the school app/ rules. Every year, the policy is also informed by input from the School Council which can result in changes/modifications to items of uniform. In addition, this, the 2026/27 policy, has been informed by the responses of a consultation with all stakeholders that ran from 25th June 2025 - 11th July 2025. A total of 397 responses were received from a range of pupils, parents, members of the Board of Governors and staff which was sent via Google Classroom, the school app and email respectively.

1.4. Below are the main findings of our recent consultation with parents, pupils, BOGs and staff:

- When asked to rank the following in order of least, very and most important:
 - 78.1% indicated they consider **comfort** to be most important to them
 - 45.6% indicated they consider **sustainability** to be most important to them
 - 64.7 indicated they consider **affordability** to be most important to them
- 85.4% agree we should demonstrate how we take costs into account when designing a uniform
- When asked to rank the following in order of not well, well and very well:
 - 13.6% indicated they feel our uniform fulfils the condition of **comfort** very well

9.3% indicated they feel our uniform fulfils the condition of **flexibility** very well

- 68.5% agree that branded sports kit should not be compulsory elements of the PE kit
- 95.2% agree that school should have team kits available for loan for those representing the school
- 95% are in favour of a low cost, optional summer uniform
- 86.6% are supportive of us retaining a stitched crest on the uniform blazer
- 75.2% of Coláiste Chaitríona parents would like boys and girls of Coláiste Chaitríona to wear the same blazer
- 93.7% agree that we should establish a uniform bank

1.5. Below are the ways in which the above findings have impacted the review of our uniform policy:

- Given the importance our respondents attach to the affordability of uniform items, together with the finding that the majority of respondents agree we should demonstrate an awareness of cost when designing our uniform, we have made every effort to minimise, as far as possible, the number of branded items that make up our uniform and PE kits and to decide on more uniform items that are available from our three uniform stockists as well as high street outlets and online, to support competitive pricing. We also now stock school tights in the Pupil Hub. These are bought at a discounted price and sold on a non- profit basis.
- The school benefits from no financial or in-kind benefits from any of its suppliers.
- In response to the high number of respondents who consider comfort to be most important to them and the low number who feel our uniform fulfils this condition, we plan to pilot a new summer uniform with Year 8 pupils in May/June 2026, which will be optional. This also accommodates the 95% of respondents who would like to see this being introduced.
- Also in response to the low number of respondents who feel our uniform does not fulfil the condition of comfort, our PE kit is now not only comfortable, especially for those pupils who may have concerns about body image, but is practical and affordable as it now includes navy shorts or plain navy leggings and a plain navy polo shirt. There is no longer a requirement for a branded sports top.
- In response to the low number of respondents who feel our uniform does not fulfil the condition of flexibility, we are making a greater number of uniform items optional, rather than compulsory. (See Uniform Requirements below)

- As more than half of respondents disagree with branded sports kits being compulsory and almost all agree that schools should make team kits available on loan for those representing the school, our PE kit will reflect these findings (see Uniform Requirements below) and full team kits will be provided by the school to those representing the school.
- As an overwhelmingly high number of respondents expressed a wish to retain the stitched crest on the uniform blazer, we will do so.
- As three quarters of Coláiste Chaitríona parents wish to have the same blazer for girls and boys of Coláiste Chaitríona, this is something we will work towards phasing in from September 2027 to minimise cost implications for those parents. This will mean there is no significant cost differential between the girls'/ boys' uniform in Coláiste Chaitríona.
- We currently have a small stock of pre-owned uniform items which we will now enhance even further. In particular, we now intend to make an annual appeal to all outgoing Year 12 pupils for any unwanted clip-on ties for re-use in our uniform bank. Parents who require help with uniform should contact the Pupil Hub directly. This will help families with costs as well as contributing towards more environmentally friendly policies, responding to almost half of respondents to our consultation for whom sustainability is most important.

2. LINKS TO OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES/ GUIDANCE/LEGISLATION

2.1. This policy is linked to the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and has been prepared to meet the school's responsibilities under DE's updated "School Uniforms Guidelines"(November 2025)

2.2. This policy has regard to the following legislation:

- The School Uniforms (Guidance and Allowances) Bill 2026
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997
- The Sex Discrimination(NI) Order1976
- SENDO 2005

- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations(NI) 2006

3. RATIONALE

We must emphasise how important it is that students of Saint Catherine's College wear our school uniform with pride and come to school in full uniform at all times. This is something we constantly stress to students, staff and parents because we believe that it promotes cohesion, good discipline and harmonious relationships, all of which are best achieved when everyone conforms to the same standards.

In addition to supporting positive relationships, behaviour and discipline, school uniform is important in setting an appropriate tone. We believe it is invaluable in instilling pride in our school and encouraging identity with, and support for, the school ethos. The wearing of a uniform ensures pupils of all races and backgrounds feel welcome in Saint Catherine's College and can protect children from social pressures to dress in a particular way.

Uniform also protects and safeguards our pupils by enabling staff to easily identify pupils, with the yellow blouse and yellow-trimmed jumper for example, distinguishing between KS3/4 pupils and those in Sixth Form, and the non- braided and braided blazer allowing for the quick and easy distinguishing of Coláiste Chaitríona pupils and non- Coláiste Chaitríona pupils respectively. The wearing of uniform also results in the quick and easy identification of potential intruders in the school.

We also believe that school uniform supports effective teaching and learning.

4. UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

4.1. Correct uniform must be worn at all times during the day and when travelling to and from the school. Uniform must also be worn for educational visits. All items of uniform must be clearly labelled.

4.2. INDOOR UNIFORM:

Girls

Braided school blazer

Pleated/checked skirt

Yellow blouse(KS3&4)

White blouse (Years 13 & 14 only)

School jumper (**optional**)

School clip-on tie

Girls/Boys (Coláiste Chaitríona)

Plain school blazer (from 2027)

Pleated skirt/Black trousers

Yellow blouse/White shirt

School jumper (**optional**)

School clip-on tie

Formal, plain black shoes only

Plain green tights **only** (no slouch/knee/ankle socks)

Formal, plain black shoes only

SUMMER UNIFORM

Based on the findings of a pilot held in May/June 2026 a new, **optional** summer uniform consisting of a green polo shirt, branded with the school crest and worn with knee socks may be rolled out to the whole school during the 2026/27 school year.

4.3 Please note:

School blazer to be worn at all times (may be removed in class in summer months).

Top button to be closed and clip- on tie (appropriate to relevant Key Stage) to be worn at all times.

Tights always to be worn when representing the school at organised events/in official school photos.

All skirts to be worn below the knee

School jumper (appropriate to relevant Key Stage) not to be tucked into skirt.

Shoes should be no higher than 3 inches.

No sling back or stiletto heeled shoes for safety reasons.

Plain green hijabs only.

Trainers must not be worn unless for long term medical reasons in which case black trainers only are acceptable and a note must be submitted to the Year Head.

4.4. P.E. UNIFORM: (Not to be worn en-route to or from school)

Girls & Boys

Plain navy shorts/leggings/bottoms

Plain, navy polo shirt

Any socks

Any trainers/ plimsoles

School branded ¼ zip (**optional**)

Full team kits will be provided by the school to those representing the school in competitive sporting activities.

4.5. OUTDOOR:

Green, non-branded outdoor coat (**optional**) to be worn for commuting purposes only and removed on arrival into school and hung in designated areas around the school site.

Hoodies/sweat tops are not permitted.

School scarf (**optional**)

For reasons of health and safety, pupils must have a reflective strip displayed at all times on their school bags. School issues these to pupils in Year 8 as part of their induction programme and strips are available for parents of other pupils to buy from the school shop, if required.

5. AVAILABILITY/COST OF UNIFORM ITEMS

5.1. Main uniform

Stockists of school uniform items are:

- Dessie's, 12 Upper English Street, Armagh, BT61 7BH
- J&R Fashions, 47 North Street, Lurgan, BT67 9AG
- Maxwell's Clothing Store, 62 Union Street, Lurgan, BT66 8ED

Some items, such as white blouses/shirts, yellow blouses, black trousers, socks, shoes are available at high street outlets, supermarkets and online suppliers. School tights are available at a discounted price in the Pupil Hub.

5.2. PE kit

Stockists of optional school branded ¼ zip are:

- Armagh Sports, 22 Thomas Street, Armagh, BT61 9PX
- J&R Fashions, 47 North Street, Lurgan, BT67 9AG

School uniform requirements are available for purchase in all of our stockists all year round.

5.3 Range of costs across suppliers

Uniform Item	Range of cost
Plain blazer	
Braided blazer	
Plain jumper (optional)	
Trimmed jumper (optional)	
Skirt	
Yellow blouse	
White blouse/ shirt	
Clip-on tie	
Trousers	
Coat (optional)	
Scarf (optional)	

PE Uniform Item	Range of cost
Branded 1/4 zip (optional)	
Plain, navy polo shirt	

Navy shorts	
Navy leggings	

6. NON- COMPLIANCE WITH SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

6.1. The following do not conform with school uniform regulations:

- Jewellery, including rings. One pair of **small plain studs** may be worn in ear lobes only. Wrist watches are permitted.
- Coloured nail varnish/nail extensions. For reasons of health/safety, acrylic/long nails are not permitted.
- Excessive tan/make-up/eye make-up/cosmetic enhancements eg. eyelashes.
- Eyebrow, tongue, lip or nose piercing or large looped earrings must be removed.
- Brightly coloured or other unacceptable hairstyles must be toned down/modified. It is not acceptable to cover piercings with a plaster.
- No part of the head should be completely shaven, skin fade is not permitted.

6.2. Regular spot checks on uniform may be carried out. Where a pupil is not adhering to the school uniform policy, the relevant member of staff will make discreet enquiries as to the reason for it. The school is sensitive to any situation in which financial circumstances prevent a pupil from wearing the correct uniform. Parents may be given time to purchase the required item/ items, and, if eligible, assisted with an application for a grant under the Clothing Allowance Scheme or offered the missing item/ items from the school's own uniform bank. The school also actively promotes through the school app school uniform banks/ pop- up shops in the local community.

6.3. If, however, a pupil fails to meet the school's standards of uniform without a valid reason, this will result in a note being made on the e-report book and will be sanctioned with a period of break-time withdrawal.