



Additional FAQs in light of Covid-19

Q. Where can uniform be purchased from?

A. Orders from Trutex Direct will be through their website as usual. Kick Off Sport are looking more towards an online ordering system and are preparing size guides to help families with measurements. Kick Off have stock ready for when the shop re-opens. There will be a limit of a maximum of two people in the shop at any one time and they are looking at an appointment system for new starters where families need to purchase a significant amount of uniform. Further information will follow as they are awaiting advice from the British Retail Consortium and School Wear Association regarding trying on uniform and fitting room regulations before they can provide school with details.

Q. When can uniform be purchased?

A. We will provide parents/carers with the full uniform code and details of how to purchase once we have more detailed information from our suppliers regarding social distancing and trying on uniform, however rest assured they will have stock available for purchase.

Q. How will the school support with social distancing when purchasing the uniform?

A. We are in close liaison with our uniform suppliers and will assist by offering our facilities so shops can safely socially distance should they be required.

Q. Surely, given the national lockdown and Covid-19 crisis, this isn't important?

A. We still plan to move ahead with the new uniform for September as this was in place before the closure of school was announced. Trutex Direct and Kick Off Sport were already processing the new clothing and are on track to ensure uniform is available in time for the new academic year. The old uniform production has been discontinued, therefore only the new blazer is in stock.

Q. Will financial support be given to those affected by the recent crisis?

A. Yes. Those wishing to apply for funding will be updated shortly once we have a clear system in place for accessing financial support.

Answers to questions about uniform following the initial uniform proposal

Q. Why is the school proposing an adaptation to policy?

A. We believe that this move is in the long term interests of Highfields students because it promotes a greater sense of pride in and belonging to Highfields School and because it is a visible reflection, particularly in the community, of improving standards at the school.

Q. Will the proposal cost more for families?

A. The school finance department provided these guide costings on a year 8 minimum purchase:

- 2 x badged jumpers @ £18.60 each = £37.20
 - 3 x badged polo shirts @ £10.20 each = £30.60
- Total guide cost = £67.80

Cost of proposal:

- Badged blazer £34.99 (families in blazered schools tend to purchase one washable blazer per year)
- Pack of 3 plain white shirts @£13.00 per pack
- Tie x 1 @ £7.99
- Pack 2 plain black jumpers £10.00 for two items (optional as not all students will regularly wear a jumper under a blazer)

Total guide cost = £65.98

If families choose to purchase two blazers the cost of this proposal would be more, but we are informed by families in blazer wearing schools that one suffices if, like this one, they can be easily washed (see below).



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. If I am worried about not being able to afford the blazer can I apply for financial help?

A. Yes. We feel that the proposed cost is reasonable, but we have worked with our uniform supplier to provide a fund to support families who are facing disadvantage or deprivation.

Q. Do you realise that this will mean that we can't 'hand down' polo shirts to younger children?

A. Yes, but in the long term we intend that blazers, which are proved to be more long lasting than polo shirts, will be handed down to other students, either within the family or as part of a school organised scheme.

Q. Could my child still wear a logo jumper under the blazer?

A. Yes. But blazers could not be replaced by the logo jumper because we are trying to achieve consistency and uniformity.

Q. Can my child wear plain black jumpers underneath the blazer?

A. Yes. We would encourage over time that when logo jumpers wear out they are replaced with plain black jumpers because they are cheaper.

Q. Is this really a consultation or is it a done deal?

A. This is worded as a firm proposal but governors must, according to DfE guidance, take your stakeholder responses into account before they change uniform policy.

Q. How many other schools have blazers as part of their uniform?

A. Research suggests that nationally the majority (around 4 out of 5) of secondary school uniforms now have blazers as do all local schools apart from Anthony Gell.

Q. Who has to wear the uniform?

A. Students in Y11 in September 2020 will be required by policy to wear current uniform unless they wish to adopt blazer/tie voluntarily. Students in Y7-10 in September 2020 would be required to observe the new code which will include the blazer. If the proposal is accepted uniform will be on sale in good time for the start of the new school year.

Q. What will happen if these changes are made by governors and my child's uniform does not reflect the new policy?

A. This is dealt with in a similar way to a student breaking any other school rule as is explained in our behaviour policy.

Q. Will my child be allowed 'reasonable adjustment' in light of their SEN needs?

A. Yes. We will support all adjustments recommended by those compiling care plans.

Q. Is the code changing as far as trousers, skirts and shoes are concerned?

A. No. However, staff continue to feel that school leaders should do more to ensure that girls skirts are not short or tight as these can provide restrictions on practical activities. This will be a continued focus.

Q. Would the tie be the same?

A. Yes.

Q. Will blazers fit under coats?

A. Yes, blazers are now the norm for the majority of secondary students in England who wear coats in cold weather without issue.

Q. Why grey?

A. Because it is relatively unusual, distinctive and is a key colour in the Highfields logo along with maroon. In former consultations students have preferred grey.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can any white school shirt be worn?

A. Yes. A white school shirt with long or short sleeves is appropriate.

Q. Will girls be allowed to wear open necked blouses?

A. No. We are keen that the uniform is as simple and consistent as possible.

Q. Are the blazers washable?

A. Yes, we tested them in a 40 degree wash and then hung to dry. The garment did not require pressing. We know from families in blazer schools that mostly they are usually washed every 3 to 4 weeks.

Q. Is this a sustainable option?

A. Yes. Our suppliers assure us that 9 million plastic bottles are saved from landfill every year through their use in blazers (and trousers). <https://www.trutex.com/corporate-social-responsibility>

Q. Will my child have to wear this all year round?

A. No. We will announce when blazers are not mandatory during very hot spells in the summer. Students may remove their blazers during lessons.

Q. Shouldn't you concentrate on 'more important' things such as teaching and learning?

A. This initiative is amongst a suite of plans currently undertaken as part of our improvement plans (Big 3) which can be found on our website. Not all improvements to promote student progress are directly linked to teaching and learning. For example, recently we worked with our local authority to refurbish our sixth form canteen to enhance an ethos of pride and care amongst those students. As with uniform we feel that this change will result in long term benefit to students.

Q. Will you be introducing a formal uniform for sixth formers?

A. No but this matter is under constant review.

Q. Do you plan to match the red on the blazer with the colour of the tie?

A. Yes, we have agreed this with our supplier.

Q. Will you be introducing a staff dress code?

A. No. We have professional discussions when we believe a staff member's work wear requires adjustment.

Q. Isn't the school just trying to make money?

A. There is no material benefit to the school of having blazers over any other form of uniform. Any monies received in commission from uniform supplies are offered back to families who may face deprivation or disadvantage.

Q. Why does Highfields have a uniform policy in the first place?

A. The decision to become adopt a school uniform policy was made by governors some time ago and since then there has been no significant call for change. The current policy was recently re-ratified. The reasons that a school might choose a uniform policy are briefly summarise in these articles

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/mortarboard/2013/oct/03/why-wear-school-uniform>

<https://www.impactteachers.com/school-uniform-important-can-enforce-dress-code/teacher-tips>

Q. What evidence do you have that school uniform improves achievement?

A. None. There is no evidence to suggest that students at uniform schools do better than non-uniform schools. There is, however, some evidence around the link between uniform and wellbeing

<https://www.trutexbtru2u.co.uk/research-shows-wearing-school-uniform-helps-reduce-bullying/>

In any event, there is no proposal to abandon a policy of school uniform.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Does my child still have to wear uniform if their measurements are unusual?

A. Yes. Around 95% of schools in UK have a uniform policy and across those schools a very significant range of body types have been accommodated. Highfields School current uniform, and the proposed uniform is affordable, comfortable and inclusive coming in a range of easy to find options.

Q. Will girls be allowed to wear trousers?

A. Yes, of course.

Q. My child doesn't like the way they look in typical school uniform - can they adapt it?

A. No. We have no evidence to suggest that a self-esteem issue will be solved through adapting uniform and your child's wellbeing will not be enhanced if they find themselves in conflict with school staff over this issue. However, if your child has special needs please contact our SENCO who will advise you on reasonable adjustments we can make (see answer above).