



# KNOCKEVIN SPECIAL SCHOOL

## SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

<b>Target audience</b>	Parents, Teaching and Learning staff, Governors,
<b>Policy Date</b>	November 2025
<b>Policy Review Lead</b>	Principal, S Liddell
<b>Date ratified by BoG</b>	November 2025
<b>Date to be reviewed by</b>	Nov 2028 or earlier as required



Article 8 – I have the right to an identity

Article 15 – I have the right to meet friends and join groups

## **School Uniform Policy**

### **Introduction**

It is our school policy that all pupils wear school uniform when attending school, or when participating in school-organised events outside normal school hours. We ask pupils to wear their uniform and to take a pride in their personal appearance. School uniform is a way of ensuring that our pupils are ready to learn, respectful and safe and that they have a sense of belonging to our school community, in line with our rights-respecting and inclusive ethos.

Some items of uniform can be bought with the School logo on, whilst other plain items are easily available, at very competitive prices, at local shops including supermarkets. A complete list of the items needed for school uniform, including those for P.E. and Outdoor Learning, is included in this policy.

Knockevin regularly consults with stakeholders in developing uniform guidelines. Most recent in- depth consultation and resulting change has taken place as follows:

2018 – pupil voice (student council campaign) led to the introduction of a uniform for senior pupils. Pupils led the design and introduction, with additional consultation held with parents, staff and Governors

2021 – parent consultation and thorough engagement with additional stakeholders led to the introduction of a senior P.E. kit

2025 – consultation and amendments to policy as a result (appendix 4), introduction of a warm clothes bank

**We believe that the wearing of a school uniform enables students to identify with their school, gives a sense of belonging, is practical and smart, reinforces a positive work ethos and reduces expenditure for parents/carers**

### **Aims and objectives**

The aims of this policy are to:

- demonstrate how and why we chose the uniform items that we have in school;
- ensure clarity around what can be worn or not at school;
- promote a sense of pride in our school;
- help to create a sense of community and belonging towards the school;
- ensure that our pupils can be clearly identified with our school;
- support our commitment to inclusion;
- ensure pupils' uniforms are practical, smart, affordable and are suitable, with health and safety in mind;
- give clarity on how we ensure we meet individual sensory needs or deliver other essential adaptations

## **Uniform Choices Made by Knockevin – Our Guiding Principles**

### **1. Ensure Affordability and Accessibility - uniforms are affordable for families on the lowest incomes and do not impose unfair costs**

We believe that having a school uniform reduces pressure on parents, promotes equality and can reduce incidents of bullying behaviour. We provide a high level of choice and limit the number of branded items that pupils are asked to wear. A full breakdown with cost of branded items is provided within this document.

Local suppliers are very limited, primarily due to our relatively small pupil numbers across a wide age group and the pressure this places on stockists in terms of their own stock and costs. The school has engaged extensively with our main supplier around costs and keeping them minimal. We also appreciate the non-monetary value of our main stockist being local, having all items in the one shop and having a positive relationship with our families. This helps to reduce the stress of uniform shopping.

While we have different colours of polo shirts in Dundrum and Downpatrick, and a different uniform for our senior students, pupils can continue to wear their previous uniform items until they need to replace them due to fit or wear and tear.

Knockevin has specific uniforms for work experience in 'Roots Cafe'. They are required for Health and Safety reasons so cannot be options. To avoid placing financial pressure on parents or excluding any pupils from participating, school meets the cost in full. The items provided include branded T-shirts, aprons and 'chef whites' as well as accessories that include hair nets. Similarly, school provides aprons, t-shirts and hair coverings for 'What a Hoot' pop-up café in Downpatrick. School have an arrangement in place with South Eastern Regional College (SERC) to ensure that a similar arrangement is in place for pupils attending catering or other courses that require a uniform.

Grants have been provided to assist with specific items of uniform and we also operate a 'swap shop' each year. School encourages parents to donate good quality items of uniform at all time of the year and these can be provided to pupils on a loan basis.

School can support parents with applying for uniform grants as required.

### **2. Promote Equality and Inclusion – we comply with relevant human rights and equality legislation, including appropriate adjustments being made for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs**

Knockevin is a Special School catering for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties and/or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. We provide advice within this document on alternatives and sensory friendly adaptations. We also ensure that we take into account individual needs and make arrangements with parents to accommodate them. Examples include pupils wearing their own clothing under/over a uniform item, pupils wearing hats, body warmers or other non-uniform items that help meet sensory needs and in some rare cases a pupil wearing their own clothes for sensory or medical reasons.

### **3. Support Comfort and Practicality – our uniform is comfortable, practical, easy to maintain and suitable for all seasons**

Knockevin embraces practical, activity based learning and as a Forest School we take part in a high number of Outdoor Learning sessions. Our uniform supports learning, play and physical activity.

Our uniform can be easily adjusted and adapted to suit the weather and season. While a practical, warm waterproof coat is available, this is not a requirement. Pupils can wear generic shorts, scarves, coats etc as needed for comfort. We encourage independence, self-help and decision making and pupils are at liberty to put on and remove jumpers, blazers etc as required. Staff are also mindful that not all pupils will independently make these decisions and will monitor and take steps to support pupils e.g. by prompting them to remove a jumper if they appear very warm in class.

At our senior school site, a more formal uniform is in place but pupils also wear 'P.E. kit' on specific days as per their class timetable requirements.

Our uniform items have been chosen to be hard wearing and washable.

#### **4. Encourage Transparency and Consultation – we consult parents, pupils and any other group we consider relevant when devising or reviewing our school uniform policy**

We are open and transparent about our policy and decision making and ensure consultations take place when reviewing and making decisions. If any changes are made, there will be a transitional period to ensure that uniform items are not wasted and there is no added pressure on families.

#### **5. Safeguard Participation and Wellbeing – we ensure that uniform costs do not deter pupils from applying to a school or participating in school activities. Pupils are not penalised for uniform breaches caused by affordability issues.**

Any activities that involve a more specific uniform item are carefully assessed and at present these items are all provided by the school. This includes for internal work experience, SERC attendance and sports participation. The school has secured sponsorship for their football kit so that all pupils can participate with pride in external tournaments with no cost for a kit.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **The Role of Parents**

We ask parents to ensure that their child has the correct uniform, and that items are clean and labelled with the child's name. If a parent has difficulties for any reason with fulfilling this request, they are asked to speak confidentially to a senior member of staff to discuss the issues. Parents should be assured that we will do all we can to help. We operate a uniform 'swap shop' at the beginning of each school year and also aim to hold clean, good quality second hand 'spares' throughout the year. Parents should speak to a senior member of staff if they require any item of uniform on loan or as a donation or if they require support accessing a uniform grant or with other costs. Any requests will be treated with discretion and confidentiality.

Pupils who arrive at school wearing non-school uniform or wearing an incorrect item of uniform, will be loaned an appropriate item from school where possible, unless school are aware of reasons for the items. Parents will be contacted to discuss the matter.

The school welcomes pupils from all backgrounds and faith communities. If there are reasons, for example on religious grounds, why parents want their child to wear clothes that differ from our school uniform, the school will consider such requests sympathetically. If any parent would like to request a modification to the uniform policy they should, in the first instance, contact a Senior member of staff.

## **The role of staff**

Staff support the Leadership Team in maintaining high standards of uniform. They ensure that they are role models in the wearing of appropriate and safe clothing. **Where pupils fail to wear the correct uniform, staff will make discreet and sympathetic enquiries.** Staff are also aware that sometimes a pupil's standard of dress may indicate care issues at home. If this is suspected, it will be referred to a member of the safeguarding team for advice.

## **The Role of Governors**

The Board of Governors supports the School in implementing the school's uniform policy. It considers all representations from parents regarding the policy and liaises with staff to ensure that it is implemented fairly and with sensitivity. It is the governors' responsibility to ensure that the school uniform meets all regulations concerning equal opportunities. Governors ensure that the school uniform policy enables pupils to dress sensibly, in clothing that is hardwearing, safe and practical.

## **Jewellery, Hair Ornaments, Make-up, Nail Varnish and Headscarves**

For health and safety reasons, we do not allow pupils to wear jewellery. The exception to this rule are small objects of religious significance. Pupils are required to remove any items (including earrings) during PE lessons to prevent them from causing injury. Class teachers will advise parents when PE lessons are to take place so earrings can be removed. Please note: staff are not permitted to remove earrings.

Hair bands, ribbons/bows or 'scrunchies' should be plain and either blue, navy or black. Hair bands should not have objects attached to them. Make up and nail varnish should not be worn to school unless for an out of school hours function, for example a school disco, or for an event in school hours where permission has been expressly granted and communicated, for example an end of year leavers' lunch and disco.

Pupils are free to wear a headscarf if they wish to. These must however be plain and either navy, white or black.

## **Footwear**

For health and safety reasons, we do not allow pupils to wear shoes with platform soles, Heelys or high heels. All pupils are required to wear flat, plain black shoes or trainers without logos. These should be closed in with no toes visible. We appreciate that prescribed specialist shoes such as piedro boots may be necessary and permit boots to be worn if required. If boots are worn these should also be flat and plain black or navy. Sandals and flip-flops are not permitted at any time for safety reasons.

We appreciate that pupils may not tolerate wearing footwear at home and may prefer to be barefoot. We balance the need for this sensory experience with safety and as part of each child's programme will consider ways of helping them to accept necessary footwear. We will work with parents and will consider a staged approach if needed e.g. starting with non-regulation footwear such as crocs or slippers. We cannot

allow pupils outdoors or to transition around the school barefoot or in soft slippers without a sole for safety reasons.

### **Adaptations for Weather**

In the cold weather, particularly in the winter months, pupils are expected to wear coats and are also asked to wear a hat/ear-muffs, scarf and gloves. Please ensure that all items are clearly named. Parents are aware that outdoor learning is a key part of our curriculum and as such we request that coats are warm and waterproof. Cold weather items are not branded and do not have to be any specific colour. We have implemented a 'Keep Knockevin Cosy' project that ensures we have spare warm clothes in school for any pupil in need (appendix 3).

Items such as polo-shirts / short-sleeved shirts, tailored shorts and summer dresses are all appropriate in hot weather as per our uniform information. Should we experience unseasonably hot weather outside the identified summer months, school will communicate to parents that summer uniform can be worn. Parents should apply sunscreen before sending pupils to school and should also ensure pupils have a hat.

### **Special Circumstances**

Special dispensation can be requested for temporary or permanent exemption from the prescribed school uniform or elements of it. This will usually be on medical grounds, for sensory reasons or for other exceptional circumstances. The Principal will have the ultimate decision with regards to granting or refusing this.

### **Cost of Uniform and Branded Items**

All items are available in Pricewise Downpatrick, with some items also available in Minders. The school does not have any agreement with school stockists and does not receive any income from the sale of items.

The school is mindful of the need to ensure that their uniform is as cost effective as possible. A breakdown of branded/non-branded items is as follows:

#### **Dundrum/Downpatrick**

Shoes, socks, jogging bottoms – unbranded

Polo shirt, jumper – branded for reasons of identity and belonging. Polo shirt costs range from £12.99-£19.99 and the sweatshirt starts at £16.99 and is £24.99 for the largest adult sizes. Parents can choose a plain unbranded polo shirt if preferred.

Coat – generic, unbranded, with optional branded option available

PE uniform – plimsolls, shorts and t-shirt all unbranded

Total cost of branded items: £29.98 - £44.98 (for largest adult sizes) or £12.99-£19.99 if polo is plain

Castlewellan (also optional for any pupil in Downpatrick aged 14+ if they prefer)

Shoes, socks, tights, skirt, trousers, shirt, acrylic blazer\* - unbranded

Jumper, tie – school specific design created by pupils, creates sense of identity and belonging. The tie costs £9.99 as it is accessible and promotes independence (easy use design). Jumper costs £34.99 for all sizes. School will accept a plain navy woollen v necked 'school jumper' as an alternative.

PE uniform – t-shirt and quarter zip required, branded (pupils have the option of a plain light blue or navy sports material t-shirt under their quarter zip). T-shirt costs £29.99, quarter zip costs £49.99

- shorts/jogging bottoms – branded available but plain navy shorts or jogging bottoms can also be worn

- socks, trainers – unbranded

\*blazer badge bought separately and provided free of cost Sept 22, available for £6.99

+PE uniform introduced following consultations with parents, pupils and staff, grant of £20 per pupil provided towards initial cost of quarter zip Sept 21

Total cost of branded items: £46.97 - £131.95 depending on choices made on optional items

### **Lost Property**

Any unidentified items of school uniform will be taken to the school office. Pupils are encouraged to look here to reclaim lost property, on the understanding that the found item will be clearly named.

**Pupils can become upset as a result of lost clothing. Parents should help us to reunite lost items of clothing with their owners by labelling items with their child's name**

### **Help Accommodating Sensory or Self-Help Needs**

As a Special School, we understand that a number of our pupils may find wearing a school uniform challenging. We work with parents before their child joins Knockevin to explore the use of any necessary supports. These can include social stories, practical desensitisation programmes and the use of tasks such as matching/dressing visuals. Parents can speak to their child's class teacher at any time if they need support helping their child to wear school uniform.

Parents are informed about supermarket uniforms that may be helpful, including the 'Easy On' range at Asda and the 'Adaptive' range at Marks and Spencer.

### **Non-Uniform Days**

As per our fundraising policy, we limit the number of non-uniform days held throughout the year. We are mindful of the expense and time pressure that these days can create for parents so we plan them with this in mind, ensuring where possible a spread throughout the year. Days are usually themed around a colour or wearing a 'normal' item of clothing in a different way e.g. odd socks. Where days require 'dressing up', parents are given a number of low/no cost ideas.

We understand that coming to school without uniform can be challenging for our pupils so we always accommodate pupils wearing their uniform as usual. These pupils are still included in all activities and staff are mindful not to make them feel different in any way. We will assist by offering a mask/hat or costume item sent from home if appropriate but will never put any pressure on a pupil to join in with non-uniform or fancy dress.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The governing body monitors and reviews the school uniform policy at least every 3 years in consultation with stakeholders. Any changes are made in consultation with relevant parties, with decisions communicated and a transition period included in any planned changes.



## **Appendix 1**

### **School Uniform List**

Our school uniform colour is a combination of blue and navy. Most items can be bought from local shops – Pricewise for branded items (some also available in Minders) and supermarkets including Asda and Lidl for non-branded. Items marked with a \* below are usually branded but can also be bought plain / without the school logo on if preferred.

We highlight that our school uniform is gender neutral and pupils can make choices.

Hair should be tidy and long hair tied back – this helps to ensure that pupils can safely take part in physical activity.

Make-up and jewellery should not be worn.

Please remember to label all items of clothing as well as bags, lunchboxes etc with your child's name.

**Knockevin School uniform consists of the following:**

<b>All Pupils</b>
<p>School bag – non branded</p> <p>Lunchbox if needed</p> <p>Shoes that are flat, black and appropriate for school Your child should wear shoes that they can take on and off and manage to do up as independently as possible. Please do not send your child to school in shoes which prevent them from running in the playground. If boots are worn these also should be plain black or navy.</p>
<b>Outdoor learning</b>
<p>As you know, we actively promote a healthy lifestyle and all pupils take part in outdoor play and walks on a daily basis. Please make sure that your child has a waterproof coat with them every day. Waterproof coats can be bought with school logo if desired but this is optional and we do not have a preferred style or colour.</p> <p>Wellies and appropriate socks should be sent in to be kept in school.</p> <p>In cold weather, hats, scarves and gloves should be sent to school and in warm weather we ask for a sun hat.</p>
<b>DUNDRUM</b>



The Dundrum site's school uniform is:

- Navy Sweatshirt with school logo
- Royal blue polo shirt with school logo\*
- Navy tracksuit bottoms or navy skirt
- Navy socks (with trousers) / navy tights (with skirt)
- Black shoes – can be school shoes or smart trainers

A blue checked summer dress with white ankle socks and navy cardigan or navy shorts below knee length are optional and can be worn in May/June.

We also have a coat available with our logo.

A P.E. uniform of navy shorts, powder blue polo shirt and black plimsolls is also needed.

Pupils are asked for changes of clothes and personal care items as required. It is always a good idea to send a full set of spare clothing to be kept in school for emergencies.

#### DOWNPATRICK SITE



The Knockevin school uniform is:

- Navy Sweatshirt – with school logo
- Powder blue polo shirt – with school logo\*
- Navy tracksuit bottoms or navy skirt – not branded
- Navy socks (with trousers) / navy tights (with skirt)
- Black shoes – can be school shoes or trainers

Post-Primary pupils aged 14+ can wear the senior school uniform of blazer, shirt and tie if preferred

A blue checked summer dress with white ankle socks and navy cardigan or tailored navy shorts below knee length are optional and can be worn in May/June.

We also have a coat available with our logo.

A P.E. uniform of navy shorts, powder blue polo shirt (no logo required but you may want to re-use school uniform items) and black plimsolls is also needed. Please note that our Senior School pupils at Castlewellan have a PE uniform available from Pricewise. Some of our older Downpatrick site based

pupils may also like to consider the Senior school shorts and t-shirt for PE days or as an alternative to school uniform. This is acceptable but optional.

Pupils are asked for changes of clothes, personal care items and swimming gear as required. Swim gear sent to school should include a navy swimsuit / trunks and a towel.

### SENIOR SCHOOL – CASTLEWELLAN SITE



As part of making the transition to 'big school' new and exciting, all pupils attending the Senior School site in Castlewellan wear the Senior School uniform. The uniform is as follows:

- Navy school v-neck knitted jumper with blue trim
- School tie
- White long-sleeved school shirt (short sleeved optional May/June)
- Navy blazer with senior school badge (badge purchased separately)
- Navy school trousers or navy school skirt
- Black socks with trousers/ navy tights with skirt
- Black school shoes
- Pupils are permitted to wear navy knee length socks with skirts in May/June (optional).

Navy tailored shorts below knee length are optional and can be worn in May/June.



**P.E. Uniform**

Senior Pupils can come to school on allocated PE days wearing their PE uniform, which includes:

- Navy quarter zip sports top with school logo
- Navy skinny sports bottoms (no school logo) or any plain navy jogging bottoms
- Navy and blue sports material polo shirt with Knockevin logo\*

- Navy sports shorts (no school logo) or any plain navy shorts – changed into and worn during PE/gym session only and can also be worn instead of school trousers on P.E. days in May/June only

Class teacher will communicate to parents regarding which days PE uniform should be worn on. Pupils must wear full school uniform on all other days.

Pupils are asked for changes of clothes, personal care items and swimming gear as required. Swim gear sent to school should include a navy swimsuit/trunks and a towel.

## SCHOOL FOOTWEAR

Acceptable	Unacceptable
	

## **Appendix 2**

### Parent Letter Regarding 'Swap Shop'

Dear Parent/Carer

In August we are running a uniform swap shop for pupils returning to Knockevin. If you have any uniform items that are still in good condition, we would really appreciate it if you would consider donating them to school. Please wash and remove names from labels and send to school before the end of term or you could drop them into us the first week in August.

We hope that this will not only help families with uniform costs but will also go some way towards helping protect the environment as items will be reused.

Any donated items not collected will be kept in school to be used as spares so nothing will go to waste.

We are also happy to accept good quality uniform items at any point during the year. Please keep us in mind if your child has outgrown an item. These will be used as spares or kept to loan/give to another family.

Many Thanks for your support

# KEEP KNOCKEVIN COSY!



**We need your warm-hearted help!**

**We're collecting gently-used warm coats, hats, scarves, and gloves for ages 3 to adult.**

These will stay in school so pupils can borrow them anytime—perfect for forgotten layers on chilly days!

**Have something warm to spare?**

Pop your donations our way and help keep our school community snug and smiling.



**Thank you for your support!**

## November 2025 Consultation Feedback – Summary

### Parents

- **Survey Responses:** 12 responses from parents across all three sites.
- **Uniform Preference:** All but one parent supports pupils wearing a uniform.
- **Positives Highlighted:**
  - Appearance and smartness
  - Ease of wear and washability
  - Indicates school time / supports transition from home to school
  - Comfort and practicality (including P.E. uniform)
- **Concerns:**
  - Powder blue colour stains easily
  - Difficulty finding good fit for some pupils (school flexibility appreciated)
- **Cost Feedback:**
  - 75% happy, 25% “maybe” happy
  - No respondents unhappy with cost
- **Uniform Grant:**
  - 42% access grant; some unsure of eligibility (school to share info regularly)
- **Senior P.E. Uniform:**
  - High satisfaction overall; one parent of a younger pupil requested whole school option as prefers it over regular uniform for fabric and washability
- **Additional Comments:**
  - Request for ordinary tie option
  - Desire for whole-school P.E. uniform
  - Appreciation for flexibility on fit

### Pupils

- **Consultation Method:** Face-to-face via pupil voice groups.
- **Uniform Preference:**
  - All Primary and some Post-Primary pupils want uniform
  - Those opposed cited comfort of own clothes and self-expression
- **Positives:**
  - Smart appearance, comfort, warmth
  - Seasonal flexibility (shorts in summer, hats in winter)
- **Suggestions:**
  - Spare clothes in school for wet/dirty situations
  - Primary pupils suggested a stock of warm items (coats, hats, scarves)
- **P.E. Uniform:**
  - All Post-Primary pupils like it; practical and boosts confidence in sports

### Governors

- **Feedback:** Positive; policy praised for flexibility in meeting individual needs.
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## **Key Next Steps**

1. **Uniform Grant Awareness:**
  - Share clear eligibility details regularly via Seesaw and social media.
2. **Fit Challenges for specific pupils:**
  - Continue flexibility for pupils needing adapted uniform; continue guidance for parents on sourcing suitable items.
3. **Colour & Fabric Review:**
  - Explore options for reducing staining on lighter colours in future (move to single site school could mean we consider Royal Blue for whole school)
4. **Tie Options:**
  - Be aware of request for ordinary tie alongside elasticated version but need to negotiate with supplier around this as cost for a small number could be prohibitive.
5. **Whole-School P.E. Uniform:**
  - Assess feasibility and cost implications as we move towards a single site; consult pupils and parents further at time of next uniform policy review.
6. **Spare Clothing Initiative:**
  - Implement a stock of warm items and spare uniforms for emergencies.
7. **Ongoing Communication:**
  - Maintain regular updates on uniform policy and support options. Add updated policy to website.