

St. Benedict's College, Randalstown



Uniform Policy

St. Benedict's College, Randalstown-Uniform Policy

1. Rationale & Aim for School Uniform

At St. Benedict's College Randalstown, we believe that a school uniform fosters a sense of identity, community, and pride. It promotes equality by removing competition over clothing and supports discipline while ensuring students are easily identifiable for safety and safeguarding purposes. Our uniform is designed to be practical, comfortable, flexible and safe, aligning with our core values of affordability, comfort and sustainability.

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that all pupils and their parents/carers understand what is expected and accepted by the School in terms of uniform and appearance;
- Outline the steps that the School will take to ensure compliance with the policy;
- Make clear the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in ensuring that the highest standards are upheld in respect of uniform and appearance.

2. Key Principles

- **Affordability:** The uniform has been designed to be accessible to all families. We provide a range of purchasing options to help manage costs, including the operation of a uniform bank (appendix 1) on site and sourcing from a variety of retailers.
- **Comfort:** The uniform items are chosen to ensure students' comfort in all weather conditions and for different activities throughout the school day.
- **Sustainability:** We promote sustainable practices by encouraging the use of long-lasting materials, and the operation of a uniform bank.
- **Health & Safety:** We want to ensure that our school uniform enables easy identification of St Benedict's College students.

3. Uniform Consultation, Items and Costs

Students, staff and parents have been consulted on our school uniform policy and requirements. It is important to ensure that the uniform meets the practical needs of learning, positive behaviour and engagement in lessons, while supporting health and safety and affordability for parents.

Compulsory Uniform Requirements:

Uniform Item	Cost Range	Where to Buy
Blazer (Navy with School Crest) Blazer	from £60 smallest to £90 larger £50.99- £55.99	Local retailers- Wallaces (details below) Select Kidz, Ballymena
Boys Blue Shirt (Long or Short Sleeve)	Shirt 2 pack £20 £19.99- £22.99 £8 - £15	Wallace's Select Kidz, Ballymena Supermarkets, department stores, online retailers
Girls Striped Blouse	Blouse 2 pack from £30 smallest to £40 larger	Wallace's
School Tie	£6.99 £8.99	Select Kidz, Ballymena Local retailers- Wallace's
Grey Trousers	Trousers from £25 smallest to £35 larger £12 - £25	Wallaces Supermarkets, department stores, online retailers
Navy Skirt	£30	Wallace's

	£30.99-£35.99 £12 - £25	Select Kidz, Ballymena Supermarkets, department stores, online retailers
Palin Navy V-Neck Jumper	from £25 smallest to £35 larger £12 - £25	Wallace's Supermarkets, department stores, online retailers
Black Out Trainers	£10 - £40	Shoe stores, department stores, online retailers, supermarkets
Navy Tights – Minimum 30 denier (Girls) / Black Socks (Boys)	£3-£10	Supermarkets, department stores, online retailers
Branded PE Kit (Jersey, Shorts & Socks)	Kids (up to age 13) £48.50 Adults (xS +up) £58.00	Online local retailer MFC

Total Estimated Cost: The overall cost for a full uniform, including the PE Kit, ranges from £98 to £200, depending on the supplier and number of additional items selected.

4. Where to Buy

Uniform items are available from a variety of sources, including:

Local Retailers: For generic items like shirts, trousers, skirts, and shoes.

- **Select Kidz- Ballymena**
- **Wallace's- Antrim**

Supermarkets: Many uniform items can be bought at affordable prices in local supermarkets, making uniform shopping more accessible to all families.

- **Tesco's, Antrim**
- **Sainsburys,**
- **Online Retailers:** e.g. Dunnes, M&S-Competitive pricing and convenience of delivery for families.

We have deliberately provided a wide range of suppliers to ensure competitive pricing and flexibility for parents. The school also ensures that minor variations in the shade of colours, especially the unique Navy of the blazer, are acceptable to avoid families being restricted to one supplier.

5. Gender Equality in Pricing

We have ensured there is no significant cost differential between boys' and girls' uniforms. Trousers and skirts are priced comparably, and both boys and girls have access to the same shirts, jumper and PE kit items. This promotes fairness and equality among all students.

6. Financial Support

Financial support towards uniform costs is available from the Education Authority (EA).

All parents/carers seeking to apply for this are required to apply on-line via the EA website and this information is communicated annually to parents/guardians via our school Gateway App:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

The allowance is open to parents/carers whose child/children attend a school in Northern Ireland and who receive one of the following benefits:

- Income Support;
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit with an annual taxable household income of £16,190 or less;
- Universal Credit with net household earnings not exceeding £14,000 per year; or where a parent/guardian is an Asylum Seeker supported by the Home Office Asylum Support

Assessment Team (ASAT). Where serious issues of affordability have been identified for individual families, financial support has been accessed from local charities.

7. Breaches of Uniform

Students who breach the Uniform policy will be subject to the Positive Behaviour Management Policy.

First Occasion

If a student attends school or a PE lesson without the correct uniform **and no valid note or explanation is provided**, this will be treated as a first instance of forgetting /not bringing in the PE kit. The student will be reminded of school and PE uniform expectations, and an *Awareness (0-point)*

entry will be recorded on SIMS for parent/carer information. Where appropriate and available, suitable PE kit may be loaned to the student for the lesson.

Second Occasion

On the second occasion of incorrect or missing uniform, a **lunch detention** will be issued. The incident will be recorded on SIMS, and parents/carers will be notified.

Third Occasion

A third breach of PE uniform expectations will result in an **after-school detention** being issued. This will be recorded on SIMS, and parents/carers will be informed of the continued failure to meet uniform requirements.

Fourth Occasion

If issues with PE uniform persist, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting with pastoral leaders to discuss concerns and to agree on appropriate actions to ensure compliance with the school's uniform policy.

Working in Partnership

Regular attendance with correct uniform is essential for safe participation, inclusion and effective learning in school. Parents/carers are expected to work in partnership with pastoral and curriculum leaders to support students in meeting uniform expectations and maintaining high standards.

8. Make Up

- Students may wear discreet (light) foundation to match their natural skin tone.
- Heavy make-up is not acceptable.
- Eyeshadow, heavy dark eyeliner, thick block eyebrow pencil, false eyelashes, fake tan, excess mascara or brightly coloured lipstick are not permitted to be worn at any time during the school day.
- Health & Safety considerations dictate that nails must be kept short. False nails/gel nails are not permitted. Students are permitted to wear one small stud in each ear, in the lobe.
- No other piercings are permitted.
- Nose rings are not permitted.

9. Hairstyle

- Hair styles should be neat and tidy.
- Hair should be of a natural colour; flamboyantly coloured or bleached hair is not permitted.
- Hair extensions should not be longer than the waist. If you are unsure, please contact the school for clarification. The final decision lies with the Principal.

- Shaved or patterned eyebrows are not permitted.

10. Symbols of faith

Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by pupils when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the pupil or the pupil's parents to the Principal, whose decision will be final, subject to the complaints procedure set out in the school Complaints Policy

11. PE Kit Policy

Our PE kit consists of a branded black, with either Blue/Pink stripes jersey and black shorts with same colour stripes, which are standard for all sports and physical activities. Students are also required to present for PE in adequate footwear to support health and safety i.e.: trainers/football boots. There is no requirement for branding on these items.

The branded PE kit is required for students representing the school in competitions or team events.

Cost of Branded PE Kit: £48.50-£58

PE Kit Loan Scheme: The school provides free access to Team Jerseys and Skorts for students representing the school in individual or team events, ensuring all students have the opportunity to participate without financial barriers.

This PE kit policy was developed in consultation with parents and students, and the consensus was that a branded kit was appropriate for PE and competitive events to promote school identity.

12. Uniform Bank

The school operates a **Uniform Bank**, which allows parents to donate and acquire second-hand uniform items at no cost. The uniform bank is open throughout the school year, with special drives held before the start of each term. This initiative supports sustainability and helps to further reduce costs for families.

13. Review and Monitoring

This uniform policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with parents, students and staff. Student and parent councils will be invited to participate in the review process. We will ensure that the uniform remains affordable, comfortable and sustainable, and that costs are kept fair and reasonable. Feedback will be collected regularly to improve the uniform policy and ensure it meets the needs of our school community.

This policy reflects our commitment to providing a uniform that balances tradition, practicality and sustainability while ensuring that all students can participate fully in school life without undue financial pressure.

Associated Policies:

- Positive Behaviour Management
- Student Code of Conduct
- Health & Safety

Appendix 1

Operating a School Uniform Bank

A **uniform bank** is a system where parents and students can donate gently used uniforms and access second-hand items at little to no cost. It promotes sustainability, affordability and reduces waste.

1. Establishment and Promotion

- **Set Up:** A physical area is available in the school, to store and display donated uniforms. (The Hub)
- **Promotion:** Parents and students are informed via the school website, emails, and parent meetings of the availability of uniform items. Through these means we promote the uniform bank as a sustainable, cost-saving initiative that everyone can benefit from.

2. Donation Process

- **Donation Drives:** We organise donation drives at the end of external exams and school year to donate and collect uniforms that students have outgrown or no longer need via social media.
- **Drop-off Locations:** We have established an easy-to-access drop-off point where parents can leave gently used uniforms- the front office.

3. Inventory and Storage

- **Sorting:** LSA staff sort donated uniforms by type, size and condition.
- **Inventory Management:** We keep a basic inventory of available items to track what is in stock.
- **Cleaning:** We ensure all donated items are clean.

4. Access and Distribution

- **Open Hours:** Families can access the uniform bank at any time via a phone call or visit to the front office. We allow families to make private appointments to access the uniform bank if they are unable to come during opening hours or prefer discretion.
- **Distribution Process:** Items are distributed free of charge. Families can take as many items as needed within reason, ensuring equitable access for everyone.

5. Sustainability and Recycling

- **Recycling Unusable Items:** Uniforms that are not fit for reuse can be repurposed as cleaning cloths or sent to a textile recycling service to minimise waste.
- **Promotion of Sustainable Practices:** We encourage families to donate uniforms rather than discarding them, helping to foster an ethos of sustainability within the school community.

6. Confidentiality and Sensitivity

- **Discreet Access:** Through an appointment service we ensure families accessing the uniform bank, especially those facing financial difficulties, can do so discreetly and without stigma.
- **Non-Disclosure:** School staff involved in operating the uniform bank maintain confidentiality regarding which families utilise the service.

7. Annual Review

- **Feedback Collection:** Via school surveys we gather feedback from families about the uniform bank's effectiveness, availability of items and areas for improvement.
- **Adjustment of Operations:** Based on this feedback and usage trends, we adjust the uniform bank's stock, hours or operation as needed to better serve the school community.

By implementing a uniform bank, schools like St. Benedict's College, Randalstown can provide an affordable and sustainable option for families while promoting a sense of community and environmental responsibility.

Appendix 2

Explanation for PE/Games Kit Requirement at St. Benedict's College Randalstown

1. Rationale for PE/Games Kit Requirement

At St. Benedict's College Randalstown, we have carefully considered the uniform requirements for Physical Education (PE) and games activities in consultation with parents, pupils and staff. We have a requirement for a **branded PE kit** for students representing the school in competitive sports and team events.

The branded kit serves the following purposes:

- **School Identity and Pride:** A branded PE kit fosters a sense of belonging and pride when students represent the school in competitions. It creates a unified look and promotes school identity when students participate in external events.
- **Recognition:** During competitive matches or team events, a branded kit ensures that students are easily recognisable as part of St. Benedict's College. This is important for coaches, spectators and for fostering a sense of teamwork.
- **Consistency:** A branded kit maintains a consistent and professional appearance, enhancing the school's reputation during inter-school events or regional competitions.
- **Health & Safety:** PE uniform ensures that students of St Benedict's College are easily identifiable, supporting supervision and health and safety.

2. Consultation with Parents and Pupils

The decision to require a branded PE kit was made after consultation with parents and pupils. The school conducted surveys and held meetings to gather feedback on the proposed PE kit policy. The key feedback and considerations were:

- **Parent Concerns:** Some parents expressed concerns about the additional cost of branded kits. In response, the school has taken measures to ensure affordability (detailed below) and introduced alternatives, such as a loan system for families who require financial assistance.
- **Student Preferences:** Students voiced a desire to have a sense of pride and unity when representing the school in sports, which aligned with the decision to have a branded kit for competitive events.

3. Branded PE Kit Requirements and Costs

For everyday PE lessons and competitions/events students are required to wear the **branded PE kit**, which consists of:

- **Branded T-shirt** with the school crest and colours: **£23.00 - £27.50**
- **Branded Shorts**: **£18.00 - £22.50**
- **Branded Half Zip (Optional)**: **£29.00 - £35.50**
- **Branded Skinnies/Leggings (Optional)**: **£23.00 -£29.50**

The total cost of the full branded PE kit ranges from **£48.50 - £58.00**, depending on the specific items required, **size** and whether families opt for additional items like tracksuits. **These branded items are only available from the school supplier and are only available online from MFC.**

However, black shorts with Blue/Pink stripes & socks can be purchased from O’Neills. Not branded but close match and not much (if any cheaper).

4. Arrangements for Accessing Branded PE Kit

Recognising that branded PE kit may pose a financial burden for some families; St. Benedict’s College has implemented several measures to ensure equitable access:

- **Second-Hand Kit Availability:** Branded PE kits are also available through the school’s **Uniform Bank**, where families can donate gently used kit. Students can access these items at reduced or no cost, ensuring affordability for all.

5. Commitment to Affordability

The school remains committed to keeping uniform costs manageable. For branded items, the school has negotiated with multiple suppliers to ensure competitive pricing and has monitored costs to avoid significant price increases.

6. Review and Ongoing Feedback

The PE kit policy will be reviewed annually, considering further feedback from parents, students and staff. The school will continue to assess the affordability and accessibility of both generic and branded kits to ensure that all students can participate in sports activities without financial hardship.

In summary, the branded PE kit requirement at St. Benedict’s College, Randalstown is in place for competitive events to enhance school identity, pride and recognition. Measures like a loan system and second-hand kit availability ensure affordability and inclusivity, so that all students have the opportunity to represent the school in sports without facing financial barriers.