

THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM



POLICY DOCUMENT 91

SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

Date approved by Board of Trustees	15 th July 2025
Next review due:	Academic Year 2027 - 2028
Policy review cycle:	Every 3 years
Policy Owner:	Headteacher

Vision Statement

***We, the staff and governors, aspire
to ensure that all our students,
irrespective of ability
and regardless of anyone's doubts,
achieve their potential in full;
and we aspire in this way to make Thomas Mills High School
the best in the country.***

Thomas Mills High School is an Academy and a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England & Wales under number 7605059

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Statement of intent

Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form believes that a consistent school uniform policy is vital for:

- Promoting the ethos of a school.
- Providing a sense of belonging and identity.
- Setting an appropriate tone for education.
- Encouraging pride in personal appearance.

For the purposes of this policy, “**uniform**” includes the following elements of pupils' appearance:

- Clothing, including the school uniform itself, variations of the school uniform such as PE kits, and other clothing worn at school, e.g. non-uniform.
- Hairstyles and headwear.
- Jewellery and other accessories.
- Cosmetics such as makeup and nail polish.

This policy lays out the measures the school has taken to ensure a consistent, fair and inclusive uniform policy, and to implement a uniform that reflects the needs of all pupils, is affordable, and provides the best value for money for both the school and pupils' families.

We believe that pupils learn most effectively and achieve their best outcomes when they are comfortable, able to be themselves, and dressed in a way that sets an appropriate tone for education.

In writing and updating this policy, we have sought to:

- Engage with the school community.
- Consider how this policy might affect groups represented in the school, especially those who share protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- Consider how comfortable the uniform will be for pupils.
- Take a sensible approach to allow for exceptions to be made, e.g. during adverse weather.
- Ensure that the uniform is suitable and safe for pupils who walk or cycle to school.
- Choose a PE kit which is practical, comfortable, appropriate to the activity involved and affordable.
- Ensure the policy is easy to access and understand.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Act 2021
- DfE (2021) 'Cost of school uniforms'
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- DfE (2024) 'School uniforms: guidance for schools'
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022) 'Preventing hair discrimination in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Finance Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The board of trustees is responsible for:

- Establishing, in consultation with the headteacher and school community, a practical and smart school uniform that accurately reflects the school's vision and values.
- Ensuring that the school's uniform is accessible, inclusive, and does not disadvantage any pupil because of their protected characteristics or socio-economic status.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of parents, pupils and the wider school community regarding changes to the school's uniform.
- Ensuring that the school's uniform is accessible and affordable.
- Demonstrating in this policy how best value for money has been achieved.
- Ensuring compliance with the DfE's '[Cost of school uniforms](#)' guidance.
- Processing and approving all eligible School Uniform Assistance Application Forms.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Enforcing the school's uniform rules on a day-to-day basis.
- Ensuring that teachers understand this policy and what to do if a pupil is in breach of the policy.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of the school community in regard to the school's uniform and making appropriate recommendations to the board of trustees.

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that pupils dress in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Where appropriate to their role, disciplining pupils who are in breach of this policy.
- Ensuring that pupils understand why having a consistent and practical school uniform is important, e.g. school identity.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing their children with the correct school uniform as detailed in this policy.
- Informing the tutor if their child requires an exemption to the uniform rules for a period of time, with a reason why.
- Ensuring that their child's uniform is clean, presentable and the correct size.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Wearing the correct uniform, in the appropriate way, at all times, unless the headteacher or authorised staff has granted an exemption.
- Looking after their uniform as appropriate.
- Understanding and respecting why a school uniform is important to the school, e.g. school identity and community.

3. Cost principles

The school will develop its uniform policy in relation to the following starting principles:

- The school will seek to ensure that the uniform is affordable. In so doing, the school will consider the total cost of school uniforms, taking into account all items of uniform or clothing parents will need to provide while their child is at the school.
- The school will seek to keep the use of branded items to a minimum.
- The school will seek to ensure that uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money, including the quality and durability of the garment.
- The school will seek to ensure that second-hand uniforms are available for parents to acquire. Information on second-hand uniforms will be published on the school's website.

Principles in practice

In accordance with the 'School Admissions Code', the headteacher will ensure that the school's uniform requirements do not discourage parents from applying for a place for their child.

The school will assess the overall cost implications of its uniform policy regularly, including prior to making any changes to the school uniform. When evaluating whether costs are reasonable and proportionate, the school will take into account the opinions and situations of:

- Economically disadvantaged parents.
- Parents with multiple children who are, or will be in the future, pupils at the school.
- Parents of younger children, as they are likely to grow quickly and require new sets of uniform more frequently.

- Parents of pupils with protected characteristics that may impact their ability to access the uniform.
- Looked after children.

The school will evaluate the cost of its uniform based on the overall collection of uniform items that parents would need to purchase for a pupil, rather than on the cost effectiveness of individual items; this will include consideration of the fact that parents will need to purchase multiples of certain items, e.g. shirts and socks, to ensure their child can come to school in clean uniform every day.

The school will keep variations in school uniform for different groups of pupils, e.g. year group-specific items or house colours, to a minimum to ensure that pupils can get the most wear out of their uniform and that parents can pass some items down to younger siblings.

The school will keep branded uniform items to a minimal level that is reasonable for all members of the school community. The school defines a branded uniform item as any item of clothing that cannot be purchased at a range of retailers, e.g. supermarkets, due to the item's logo, colour, design, fabric or other unique element. Where the school requires an item of branded clothing, it will assess how prices can be kept as low as possible and put measures in place to facilitate this. This may include:

- Ensuring branded items are longer-lasting and unlikely to be worn out quickly, e.g. ties.
- Making donated second-hand uniform available for purchase at a lower price.

The school will meet the DfE's requirements and recommendations on costs and value for money. Care will be taken to ensure that school uniform is affordable for all current and prospective pupils, and that the best value for money is secured through reputable suppliers.

The school will work with multiple suppliers to obtain the best value for money possible. Any savings negotiated will be passed to parents where possible. More information on supplier processes can be found in the '[School uniform supplier](#)' section of this policy.

The school will not make frequent changes to uniform requirements and will take the views of parents and pupils into account when considering any changes.

4. Equality principles

The school takes its legal obligation to avoid unlawfully discriminating against any pupil very seriously.

In line with the above, the school will aim to ensure that its uniform policy is as inclusive as possible so that all pupils can access a school uniform which is comfortable, suitable for their needs, and reflects who they are, while avoiding any direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics or socio-economic status.

The school will ensure that parents and pupils are consulted over any changes to school uniform, and that, where appropriate and with pupils' consent, views and advice are sought specifically from pupils, and parents of pupils, who:

- Have protected characteristics.
- Are of a religious or cultural background that has specific dress requirements.
- Have SEND and/or sensory needs.

Parents' concerns and requests regarding school uniform and amendments to it are handled on a case-by-case basis by the headteacher, and always in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

Information on how the school ensures its uniform policy does not discriminate against pupils with specific protected characteristics is outlined below.

Gender

To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils of a certain gender, the school will ensure that the cost of uniform is as equal in price as possible across items for all genders.

This includes:

- Adhering to the procedures laid out in the '[Cost principles](#)' section of this policy.
- Not directly requiring pupils of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by requiring female pupils to buy both trousers and skirts.
- Not indirectly requiring pupils of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by offering football in PE to only male pupils and requiring they buy football boots to participate.
- Not holding pupils of different genders to different uniform standards, e.g. by banning certain hairstyles for only one gender.

Religion and belief

To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils of a certain religion, belief or culture, the school will ensure that there is flexibility to allow pupils to present themselves in a way that adheres to their dress requirements as far as possible, within the school's uniform policy.

The school will endeavour to meet all requests for amendments to the uniform for these purposes; however, the needs and rights of individual pupils will be weighed against any health and safety concerns appropriate to the circumstances, e.g. if safety headgear needs to be worn.

Race

To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils of a certain race, the school will ensure that its uniform policy does not constitute unlawful indirect discrimination through blanket rules. This includes:

- Not banning hairstyles related to a pupil's ethnic origin, e.g. natural Afro hairstyles.
- Not banning hairstyles worn because of cultural, family and social customs, e.g. cornrows.
- Not banning head coverings related to a pupil's culture or ethnic origin, e.g. African heritage head wraps.

The school will follow the good practice guidance provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission on '[Preventing hair discrimination in schools](#)'.

SEND and medical conditions

To avoid disproportionately impacting pupils with SEND or medical conditions, the school will ensure its uniform policy takes into account the needs of these pupils. This includes:

- Ensuring the school uniform uses soft, stretchy fabrics and avoids intricate buttons or hard seams.
- Allowing variations to the standard uniform for pupils whose medical conditions may impact how they dress, e.g. pupils with casts who require loose-fitting clothing or pupils with hair loss-related conditions who wish to wear head coverings.

Where the needs of these pupils cannot be met in the standard uniform policy, individual adaptations to the uniform will be considered and permitted wherever possible.

The school will ensure that it works with a supplier that acts in accordance with the school's values and principles on equality and inclusion.

5. Complaints and challenges

The school will endeavour to resolve all uniform complaints and challenges locally and informally, in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The school will refer individuals who wish to complain to the Complaints Procedures Policy and request that they follow the procedures outlined therein.

When a complaint is received, the school will work with the complainant to arrive at a mutually acceptable outcome.

The school has an agreed procedure in place with its uniform supplier to deal with complaints about the supply and quality of uniforms.

In considering a complaint, parents should be aware that teachers can sanction pupils for breaching the school's rules on appearance or uniform. The school expects this to be carried out in accordance with the school's published behaviour policy. The school aims to deal with pupil non-compliance in a proportionate and fair way.

6. School uniform supplier

The school's current school uniform supplier for Jumpers and Ties is:

- **Coe's**
- **20 - 28 Norwich Road, Ipswich, IP1 2NH**
- **Tel: 01473 256061**

The trust board will ensure that a written contract is in place with the supplier for branded items. The school will tender the uniform contract regularly, whether changes to the uniform are made or not, in line with the Tendering and Procurement Policy.

The trust board will be able to demonstrate how uniform is procured at the best value for money. The headteacher will work to ensure that the items are procured as cheaply as possible without compromising on the quality, e.g. by requesting standard-style items from the supplier rather than more intricate and unique designs.

The school will not sign contracts with suppliers before requesting visualisations and samples of proposed uniform.

7. Uniform assistance

The school can support disadvantaged families in meeting the costs of uniforms. School uniform assistance may be provided to pupils in receipt of Free School Meals or Pupil Premium in certain circumstances. The school will need to evidence that this supports the educational progress.

Families who meet the criteria should contact the school office.

The school will hold second-hand school uniforms for parents to access.

Parents will be invited to donate their child's uniform when they no longer need it.

8. Non-compliance

The head teacher or person authorised by the head teacher will be permitted to ask a pupil to change into an item of uniform supplied by the school office, if available, where their dress does not comply with uniform policy.

Staff will be permitted to discipline pupils for breaching this policy, where relevant to their role, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Parents will be notified of pupils' breaches of school uniform, and we appreciate parents' support in high standards.

9. School uniform

UNIFORM (Years 7 – 11)

GIRLS

Sensible black or brown shoes, not trainers, not boots, not suede and not canvas

White or navy plain socks or black or navy tights (in a thick knit)

Pleated (stitched down) skirt in castle grey check, length on or below the knee

OR mid-grey trousers (straight leg, creased). Not flared or stretch fabric. Clip and zip fastening. Available, as acceptable skirts, from Messrs. Coes) **NOT** LEGGINGS.

White shirt

School tie

Navy V-neck jumper with the school badge and motto. No other motif is acceptable

BOYS

Sensible black or brown shoes, not trainers and not suede and not canvas

Black or grey socks.

Plain dark grey trousers, not black and not corduroy or denim

White shirt

School tie

Navy V-neck jumper with the school badge and motto. No other motif is acceptable

Acceptable fabric for trousers is a woven polyester (65%) and viscose (35%) mix

If the school deems anything a pupil is wearing is not appropriate for school, it reserves the right to insist the pupil does not wear that item.

Jewellery Ear loops, hooks, large ear rings and nose piercings are not suitable for school. Movement around the school at times becomes congested and such articles of jewellery become a safety hazard. For this reason, we ask pupils to confine themselves to one stud in each ear and other forms of jewellery are not acceptable. Extreme hairstyles are likely to be distracting and for this reason we expect pupils to confine themselves to conventional styles (and colours).

The school reserves the right to insist that pupils remove make-up including nail varnish.

Coats: Should not be worn in the building but should be left in lockers or carried in a bag.

Valuables should never be left unattended.

Pupils are advised that any expensive items brought into school are done so at their own risk.

Mobile phones: The school site and buildings are a **phone-free space**. Any mobile devices must be kept securely, and lockers are available. Students in Years 7 to 11 cannot have phones with them. Where a phone is seen (including in pockets), a detention will be given, the phone confiscated, and collection is from the School Office by a parent during office hours. Phones are allowed for travel to and from school.

Physical Education Department
PE Kit – Girls and Boys

** available only from Coes, the School outfitters

Essential Items

Polo shirt – white with navy school badge (Aptus)** *(please note that a plain white, collared polo shirt is also acceptable.)*

Shorts – navy, plain (microfibre), no stripes

Games socks – navy with emerald green hoops top**

White sport socks

Studded boots

Training shoes (non-marking soles)

Optional Extras

Rugby shirt – reversible; navy/emerald green (Akoa)** *(although this is optional, please note that normal PE shirts are not as robust or designed to play rugby in)*

Towel

Training top and trousers - (Aptus) navy**

Navy blue base layer

Girls: Navy skort / plain navy sports leggings

The school strongly recommends that students wear mouth guards when participating in rugby and hockey.

The wearing of shin pads is required for hockey and football.

Parents are reminded that neither the School, nor the Academy Trust accepts responsibility for any damage or loss to their child's belongings whilst in school.

All items of clothing and personal property must be clearly marked with the owner's name. If a named item is found, the school office will return it via the child's Form Tutor.

Unnamed items will be kept in Lost Property for one half term and then disposed of.

10. Adverse weather

All pupils will be advised to wear weather-appropriate clothing.

For hot temperatures, this includes wearing:

- **Tops that cover the shoulder area.**
- **Sunglasses with UV protection when outside.**

Pupils will be advised not to wear any jumpers or blazers during heatwaves. If outside during break times, pupils not wearing sun-safe clothing will be advised to stay in an area protected from the sun, or spare clothing is provided.

For cold temperatures, this includes wearing:

- **Scarfs, gloves, coats and hats when outside.**
- **Warm jumpers.**
- **Trousers, or skirts and thick tights.**

11. Labelling and lost property

Parents will be advised to ensure that all pupils' clothing and footwear is clearly labelled with their name and year group.

Any lost clothing will be taken to the lost property box. All lost property will be retained for a suitable period of time and will be disposed of if it is not collected within this time.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the trust board and the headteacher.

The school will engage with parents and pupils when reviewing changes to uniform.

Any subsequent changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff, pupils, parents and other relevant stakeholders.