SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Uniform Policy

Pupils, Parents and Carers

What the Academy provides, and what we ask families to provide

2026–27

Document control

Item	Detail
Document title	Uniform Policy
Version	2.0 (full rebuild)
Author	Mr R.Lilley, Principal
Previous versions	Approved by the Full Governing Body, May 2018; last reviewed January 2025
Approved by	Trust Board – 08 October 2026
Date of issue	September 2026
Next review	September 2027, or sooner if legislation or DfE guidance changes
Legal framework	Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 (limit on branded uniform items, in force 1 September 2026); DfE statutory guidance, Cost of school uniforms; Equality Act 2010
Related documents	Relationships and Behaviour Regulation Policy; Equality Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Complaints Policy; Charging and Remissions Policy

Text highlighted in yellow needs a decision or confirmation before the policy goes to the Trust Board.

Summary of changes

Version 2.0 replaces the previous policy in full. It puts into policy the arrangements set out in the letter to parents and carers of September 2026. The table below sets out what has changed in each section and why.

Section	What has changed	Why
Whole document	Rebuilt in the 2026–27 house style. "Governors" and "Full Governing Body" replaced by "Trustees" and "Trust Board". Contact address changed to office@sparkenhill.com.	Consistency with the 2026–27 policy suite.
3. The law	New section explaining the three-item limit on branded uniform and what counts as a branded item.	Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.
4. Compulsory branded items	Now exactly three: tie, blazer (KS2) and PE T-shirt, all provided free by the Academy. The branded pullover and the plaid are no longer compulsory.	Keeps the Academy within the legal limit and at no cost to families.
5. What families provide	New table. Jumpers, cardigans, skirts, pinafores and the PE hoodie may be branded or plain, and both are full uniform. White polo shirts added.	Matches the September 2026 letter.
6. PE kit and swimming	School T-shirt is the only compulsory PE item; hoodie is optional, branded or plain navy.	Branded-item limit includes PE kit.
7. Keeping costs down	Subsidy (roughly half cost), no cashback or commission, durability, published prices, supplier re-tendering.	DfE cost guidance; September letter.
8. Second-hand uniform	Free, all year, open to current and future families, with discreet collection.	DfE guidance; September letter.

Section	What has changed	Why
9. Help with cost	New section on the Academy's own hardship support.	September letter.
10. Clubs, trips and non-uniform days	Team kit lent free; taking part never depends on a donation.	Branded-item limit covers clubs; September letter.
11. Equality and individual need	Merged with the former Inclusion section; adaptations for disability, sensory and medical need added.	Equality Act 2010; September letter.
12. Jewellery and make-up	Hair rules removed (extreme hairstyles, shaved patterns, dyes). The safety rule on tying long hair back now sits in Section 11.	Avoids Equality Act 2010 risk.
13. Roles	Trust Board responsibilities rewritten; staff follow-up made supportive first.	Governance terminology; September letter.
14. When a child is not in uniform	No sanction for missing uniform. Reference to exclusion removed. Formal letter replaced by a supportive conversation.	September letter commitment.
15. Concerns and complaints	Route to the DfE after the complaints procedure added.	DfE statutory guidance.
16. Review	Annual review replacing three-yearly.	New legislation in its first year.
Appendix 1	Non-compliance letter replaced by a uniform support letter.	Matches the no-sanction approach.

1. Our approach

At Sparken Hill Academy we promote an atmosphere which encourages effort, enjoyment and a celebration of the achievements of all our pupils, in keeping with our mission: ‘Excellence and Enjoyment in Education for Everyone.’ Our concern for high standards is reflected in the pride we take in our school uniform and the feeling of belonging it creates.

Our uniform policy has been agreed by the Trust Board with **the cost to families as its first consideration**. Pupils wear uniform when attending school and when taking part in a school-organised event outside normal school hours. In coming to Sparken Hill Academy, parents and carers agree to support this policy.

2. Aims

We believe that school uniform:

- promotes a sense of pride in the school and has a positive impact on behaviour and attitudes;
- develops a sense of community and belonging;
- identifies children with our school on visits and out-of-school activities;
- is practical and looks smart;
- helps children feel equal to one another in appearance;
- is not distracting in class, as fashion clothes can be;
- is good value for money; and
- is designed with health and safety in mind.

3. The law and guidance

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 came into force on 1 September 2026. A primary school may now require **no more than three branded items of uniform in total**. That total includes PE kit, book bags and anything needed for after-school clubs.

A branded item is one that carries the school name or logo, or one that can only be bought from a particular supplier because of its colour, design or fabric.

We also follow the DfE statutory guidance, Cost of school uniforms, and our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

4. Our three compulsory branded items

Sparken Hill Academy has three compulsory branded items. **The Academy is wholly responsible for providing them free of charge**: the tie and PE T-shirt to every child on roll, and the blazer to every pupil in Key Stage 2. Families will never be asked to buy them.

Item	Provided by	Notes
School tie	The Academy, free of charge	Issued by the Academy
Blazer	The Academy, free of charge	Key Stage 2 pupils only; issued by the Academy
PE T-shirt	The Academy, free of charge	Issued by the Academy

If one of these items is lost, damaged or outgrown, parents and carers should tell the office and we will replace it. Reasonable usage applies.

Because these three items use the full legal allowance, **no other branded item can be compulsory**. Everything else on our uniform list may be bought plain and unbranded from any shop.

5. What we ask families to provide

For jumpers, cardigans, skirts, pinafores and the PE hoodie, families have a genuine choice. They may buy the school-branded version through our subsidised uniform shop, or a plain, unbranded version from any retailer or supermarket. **Both are full school uniform.** No child will be treated differently, or thought of differently, according to which option their family chooses.

Item	Status	Provided by	What is acceptable
Jumper or cardigan	Optional item, everyday wear	Parents	School-branded version from our subsidised range, or any plain grey woollen jumper or cardigan
Skirt or pinafore	Optional item, everyday wear	Parents	School-branded version from our subsidised range, or any plain grey skirt or pinafore
PE hoodie	Optional item, PE and outdoor learning	Parents	School-branded version from our subsidised range, or any plain navy blue hoodie
White shirt or white polo, grey trousers, grey shorts, summer dress	Everyday wear	Parents	Plain, unbranded, from any retailer or supermarket. Shorts are school shorts, not football or sports shorts. The summer dress is red and white checked.
Socks	Everyday wear	Parents	Plain dark grey
Coat, bag, shoes	Everyday wear	Parents	Plain, sensible and unbranded – no school-specific requirement

Coats, bags and shoes are deliberately unspecified beyond being plain and sensible, so that families can use what they already own. Uniform requirements are the same for every year group, class and house.

6. PE kit and swimming

PE

- School PE T-shirt – compulsory, provided free by the Academy
- Black shorts (not lycra), or black tracksuit or jogging bottoms – plain, from any retailer
- PE hoodie – optional, school-branded or plain navy blue

Swimming

- A one-piece swimming costume, or trunks or short swimming shorts (not baggy Bermuda-style shorts)
- Goggles may be worn with the written permission of parents or carers
- Long hair must be tied back or a swimming hat worn

Pupils may ask for changes to swimwear for religious or cultural reasons (see Section 11).

7. Keeping costs down

Where families choose branded items, the Academy subsidises every one of them. **We sell uniform to parents at roughly half of what we are charged for it**, and we take no cashback or commission from our supplier. Every saving we negotiate is passed on to families.

We buy for durability rather than price alone. Our garments survive daily wear, repeated washing and playground use, and they pass down well between siblings. For many families that makes the branded item cheaper over a year, but that judgement is for families to make, not for us to impose.

We will also:

- publish indicative prices on our website alongside this policy, so that families can compare them with the high street;
- make branded items available online from PMG Schoolwear (www.pmgschoolwear.co.uk), with free delivery to school using the voucher code SPHFCFW;
- continue to provide all pupils in F1 with a full uniform free of charge;
- avoid different requirements for different year groups, classes, houses or extra-curricular activities;
- avoid frequent changes to uniform, and keep the financial impact of any change to a minimum;
- consult parents and pupils on any significant change; and
- avoid single-supplier contracts where possible, and re-tender supplier contracts at least every five years.

Parents and carers are asked to name every item, including coats and PE kit. The Academy cannot accept responsibility for lost clothing, but named items are much easier to return.

8. Second-hand uniform

We hold a stock of good-quality second-hand uniform, including blazers, jumpers and hoodies. It is free, available all year rather than only at events, and open to families of children already with us and to those joining us in future. There is no charge or entry fee of any kind.

Families who would prefer to browse or collect discreetly can ask at the school office or speak to a member of our Community Team, and we will arrange a private time. Donations of outgrown uniform are always welcome.

9. Help with the cost of uniform

If the cost of uniform is causing difficulty, families should tell us. We hold our own hardship arrangements and can help directly, quickly and in confidence. Contact the school office or a member of the Community Team.

10. Clubs, teams, trips and non-uniform days

Families will not be asked to buy any additional branded clothing for after-school clubs, sports fixtures or inter-school competitions. Where specific kit is needed, for a football or netball team for example, the Academy lends it free of charge. If a child would rather not wear a loaned item, or cannot for medical or sensory reasons, a plain shirt in a similar colour is acceptable.

On non-uniform and dressing-up days, taking part will never depend on a donation, a costume or any financial contribution. Any contribution is voluntary.

11. Equality, faith and individual need

Every item of our uniform is available to every child. Any pupil may wear trousers, and any pupil may wear a skirt or pinafore. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we will:

- list uniform items without reference to sex;
- make sure the uniform costs the same for all pupils;
- allow all pupils to have long hair, which must be tied back for PE, DT, cookery and swimming for safety;
- welcome headscarves and other religious or cultural dress and symbols;
- allow changes to swimwear for religious reasons; and
- make sensible adaptations where a child has a disability, a sensory need or a medical requirement – different fabrics, fastenings or fit, for example.

Families can ask for an adaptation by speaking to one of our SENCOs, or by contacting the Principal through office@sparkenhill.com.

12. Jewellery and make-up

Jewellery

For health and safety reasons, children do not wear jewellery in school. The exceptions are one pair of plain stud earrings in pierced ears, and a watch.

- Stud earrings must be removed, or newly pierced ears taped over with a plaster provided by parents, for PE and swimming. Watches are removed for PE.
- Staff do not put studs back in if a child cannot manage it.
- Sleepers (ring-shaped) and dangling earrings are not permitted because of the risk of injury.
- No other body piercings are appropriate for school.
- Religious jewellery and symbols are covered by Section 11.

Make-up

Make-up, nail varnish, false nails and false eyelashes are not worn in school. Fake or glitter tattoos are not appropriate, and a child arriving with one will be asked to remove it.

13. Roles and responsibilities

Pupils

Pupils wear school uniform on the premises, when travelling to and from school, and at school-organised events or when representing the school, other than on non-uniform days. Pupils will:

- wear their uniform with pride;
- try to keep it clean and tidy; and
- remember to bring kit on the correct days.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers make sure their child has the items in Section 5, and that every item is clean, named and in good condition. Parents and carers contact the Academy if they want to ask for an adaptation linked to their child’s protected characteristics or individual needs, or if they need help with the cost of uniform.

Staff

Staff check that pupils are in uniform. Where something is missing, staff first find out why, and sort it out quietly from spare stock (see Section 14). Where it appears that cost is the reason,

staff take a sensitive approach and refer the family to the office or the Community Team for support.

The Trust Board

The Trust Board approves this policy and makes sure that it:

- keeps within the legal limit on branded items;
- is appropriate for our school's context and implemented fairly;
- takes into account the views of parents and pupils;
- offers a uniform that is appropriate, practical and safe for all pupils;
- continues to subsidise uniform so that it is affordable; and
- gives the highest priority to cost and value for money in supplier arrangements, avoiding single-supplier contracts where possible and re-tendering at least every five years.

14. When a child is not in uniform

No child at Sparken Hill will ever be sanctioned, kept out of a lesson, kept in at breaktime or prevented from joining a club, trip or team because of uniform they do not have. If a child arrives without something, we will sort it out quietly and get on with the day.

- A member of the class team will talk discreetly to the child to find out why.
- Where an item is missing, the child may be offered an item from our spare stock.
- If an item is lost or damaged, we ask parents and carers to let us know on the day.
- Where a pattern continues, a member of the phase leadership team or the Principal will contact the family to talk it through and offer help, including second-hand items and hardship support. The letter at Appendix 1 may be used to start that conversation.

Collective praise for wearing uniform, and reminders, may be given to classes in assemblies.

15. Concerns and complaints

We want to hear families' views on uniform, particularly on cost. Please write to the Principal at office@sparkenhill.com.

A formal concern about uniform, including its cost, should be raised through the Academy's Complaints Policy, published on our website. We will try to resolve disputes locally and work with families to reach an outcome that is acceptable to both. Anyone who has completed that process and still believes the Academy is not meeting the statutory guidance may contact the Department for Education through its customer help portal.

16. Monitoring and review

The Principal will review this policy annually, taking into account the views of parents, carers and pupils, and any changes to legislation or DfE guidance. At every review it will be approved by the Trust Board.

17. Links to other policies

- Relationships and Behaviour Regulation Policy
- Equality Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy

Appendix 1: Uniform support letter

Date: .....

Dear Parent or Carer,

We noticed that ..... in class ..... was not wearing [item] in school today. We have sorted this out for today, and there is nothing your child needs to worry about.

I wanted to check whether anything is making uniform difficult at the moment. If it would help, we can:

- replace a lost, damaged or outgrown tie, blazer or PE T-shirt free of charge;
- offer good-quality second-hand uniform, free of charge and at a private time if you prefer; and
- help in confidence through our own hardship arrangements.

Please remember that apart from the tie, blazer and PE T-shirt, which we provide, every item can be bought plain and unbranded from any shop.

If you would like to talk, please contact the school office on 01909 534060 or office@sparkenhill.com, or speak to a member of our Community Team.

Yours sincerely,

Mr R.Lilley

Principal