



Uniform Policy

North Kesteven Academy

2024-2025

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Contents:

1. Statement of intent	2
2. Legal framework	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Cost principles	5
5. Equality principles	6
6. Complaints and challenges	8
7. Academy uniform supplier	8
8. Finding and consulting suppliers	9
9. Uniform assistance	9
10. Non-compliance	10
11. Academy uniform	10
12. Adverse weather	14
13. Labelling and lost property	14
14. Monitoring and review	14

1. Statement of intent

North Kesteven Academy believes that a consistent academy uniform policy is vital for:

- Promoting the ethos of the academy.
- Providing a sense of belonging and identity.
- Setting an appropriate tone for education.

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

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

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

We believe that students 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 parents and students.
- Consider how this policy might affect groups represented in the academy, especially those who share protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- Consider how comfortable the uniform will be for students.
- 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 students who walk or cycle to the academy.
- Choose a PE kit which is practical, comfortable, appropriate to the activity involved and affordable.
- Ensure the policy is easy to access and understand.

2. 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 Academy 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 academy policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Policy
- Procurement Policy

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Establishing, in consultation with the headteacher and academy community, a practical and smart academy uniform that accurately reflects the academy's vision and values.
- Ensuring that the academy's uniform is accessible, inclusive, and does not disadvantage any student because of their protected characteristics or socio-economic status.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of parents, students and the wider academy community regarding changes to the academy's uniform.
- Ensuring that the academy'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.

The headteacher, with the senior leadership team, is responsible for:

- Enforcing the academy's uniform rules on a day-to-day basis.
- Ensuring that teachers understand this policy and what to do if a student is in breach of the policy.
- Listening to the opinions and wishes of the academy community in regard to the academy's uniform and making appropriate recommendations to the governing board.
- Considering necessary adjustments and ensuring the communication of these adjustments to all staff as appropriate, e.g. for a student who has a broken arm and requires a loose-fitting shirt.

Staff are responsible for:

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

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing their children with the correct academy uniform as detailed in this policy.
- Informing the headteacher 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.

Students are responsible for:

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

4. Cost principles

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

- The academy will seek to ensure that the uniform is affordable. In so doing, the academy will consider the total cost of academy uniforms, taking into account all items of uniform or clothing parents will need to provide while their child is at the academy.
- The academy will seek to keep the use of branded items to a minimum.
- The academy 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 academy will seek to ensure that second-hand uniforms are available for parents to acquire. Parents or carers should contact their child's head of year or assistant head of year for further information.

Principles in practice

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

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

- Economically disadvantaged parents.
- Parents with multiple children who are, or will be in the future, students at the academy.
- Parents of younger children, as they are likely to grow quickly and require new sets of uniform more frequently.
- Parents of students with protected characteristics that may impact their ability to access the uniform.
- LAC and PLAC.

The academy will evaluate the cost of its uniform based on the overall collection of uniform items that parents would need to purchase for a student, 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 academy will keep variations in academy uniform for different groups of students, e.g. year group-specific items or house logos, to a minimum to ensure that students can get the most wear out of their uniform and that parents can pass some items down to younger siblings.

The academy will keep branded uniform items to a minimal level that is reasonable for all members of the academy community. The academy 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 academy 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:

- Offering sew- or iron-on logo patches for blazers and jumpers that can be bought at non-specialist retailers, instead of requiring specific branded jumpers.
- Ensuring branded items are longer-lasting and unlikely to be grown out of quickly, e.g. ties.
- Making donated second-hand uniform available.

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

The academy will endeavour to 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 '[Academy uniform supplier](#)' section of this policy.

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

5. Equality principles

The academy takes its legal obligation to avoid unlawfully discriminating against any student very seriously.

In line with the above, the academy will aim to ensure that its uniform policy is as inclusive as possible so that all students can access an academy 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 academy will ensure that parents and students are consulted over any changes to academy uniform, and that, where appropriate and with students' consent, views and advice are sought specifically from students, and parents of students, who:

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

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

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

Gender

To avoid disproportionately impacting students of a certain gender, the academy 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 students of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by requiring female students to buy both trousers and skirts.
- Not indirectly requiring students of a certain gender to buy additional uniform, e.g. by offering football in PE to only male students and requiring they buy football boots to participate.
- Not holding students of different genders to different uniform standards, e.g. by banning certain hairstyles for only one gender.

The academy will implement a gender-neutral uniform, meaning that students will not be required to wear specific items based on their gender, and may wear any of the uniform items listed in the '[Academy uniform](#)' section of this policy regardless of the legal sex recorded on the academy's records. Transgender students are supported to access the uniform that best reflects their gender expression.

Religion and belief

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

The academy will endeavour to meet all requests for amendments to the uniform for these purposes; however, the needs and rights of individual students 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 students of a certain race, the academy will ensure that its uniform policy does not constitute unlawful indirect discrimination through blanket rules.

This includes:

- Not banning hairstyles related to a student'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 student's culture or ethnic origin, e.g. African heritage head wraps.

The academy 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 students with SEND or medical conditions, the academy will ensure its uniform policy takes into account the needs of these students. This includes:

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

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

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

6. Complaints and challenges

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

The academy 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 academy will work with the complainant to arrive at a mutually acceptable outcome.

The academy 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 students for breaching the academy's rules on appearance or uniform. The academy expects this to be carried out in accordance with the academy's published behaviour policy. The academy aims to deal with student non-compliance in a proportionate and fair way.

7. Academy uniform supplier

The academy's current academy uniform supplier is:

- Uniform Direct
- Dixon House, Dixon Way, Lincoln LN6 7XN
- 01522 510016
- customerservices@uniform-direct.com

The academy uniform supplier will accept academy uniform assistance vouchers.

The governing board will ensure that a written contract is in place with the supplier for branded items. The academy will retender the uniform contract every five years, whether changes to the uniform are made or not, in line with the Procurement Policy.

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

8. Finding and consulting suppliers

If the academy is considering changing its suppliers and seeks a list of available suppliers, it will consider the following options:

- Consulting an industry body
- Researching local suppliers
- Consulting with other schools and networks
- Having informal discussions with potential suppliers to help determine the academy's own needs

If the academy prepares to request bids from potential suppliers, it will consider the following elements:

- What products parents will need
- Existing contractual commitments
- Length of tender process
- The academy's evaluation process

9. Uniform assistance

The academy will support disadvantaged families in meeting the costs of uniforms. Academy uniform assistance will be provided via a voucher worth for each item of uniform that can be spent on academy clothing. The budget for the academy uniform assistance scheme will be derived from pupil premium funds.

For parents to request academy uniform assistance for specific items, their children should be eligible for FSM and this will be considered on a case by case basis. Families who wish to be considered for uniform assistance should contact the Finance Office in the first instance.

The academy will hold second-hand academy uniforms in the inclusion area near reception for parents to access; access to these uniforms will be made available upon request made to the head of year or assistant head of year.

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

10. Non-compliance

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

The headteacher, or a person authorised by the headteacher, will be permitted to ask a student to briefly go home to remedy breaches to the academy's uniform. When deciding whether to allow a student to return home, the member of staff will consider the student's age and vulnerability, the length of time it will take, and the availability of the student's parents. A parent will always be contacted before sending the student home – if contact with the student's parent cannot be made, the student will remain in school.

Where a student has been sent home to rectify uniform breaches, the absence will be recorded as 'authorised'. If a student repeatedly breaches uniform rules, or takes longer than necessary to rectify the absence, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

Parents will be notified of students' breaches of academy uniform in all cases.

11. Academy uniform

Clothing

The academy uniform is as follows:

Item	Optional or required	Branding	How to acquire	Cost per item from academy supplier
Regular academy uniform				
Plain white formal shirt with long or short sleeves	Required	No	Available from regular retailers	N/A
North Kesteven Academy blazer	Required	Yes	Available from academy supplier, second-hand from the academy (when stocks allow)	£26-£31
North Kesteven tie	Required	Yes	Available from academy supplier and second-hand from academy (when stocks allow)	£6
Black academy skirt, pleated and loose fitting	Optional	No	Available from academy supplier, second-hand	£16-£18

			from academy (when stocks allow)	
Plain black, formal, full length trousers which should be loose fitting and not made of stretch material.	Required (unless a skirt is chosen)	No	Available from academy supplier, second-hand from academy (when stocks allow), regular retailers	N/A
Black or navy coat with no logos	Optional	No	Available from regular retailers	N/A
Socks (over the ankle, plain black or white only) or tights (black or natural)	Required	No	Available from regular retailers	N/A
Sensible, plain black shoes	Required	No	Available from regular retailers	N/A
PE kit				
North Kesteven Academy grey PE T-Shirt	Required	Yes	Available from academy supplier	£8
North Kesteven Academy grey shorts	Optional (Plain black shorts can be worn or plain black sports leggings with no logos)	Yes	Available from academy supplier (plain black shorts or sports leggings are available from regular suppliers)	£8-£9
North Kesteven sports socks	Optional (white socks can be worn as an alternative)	Yes	Available from academy supplier (white socks available from regular retailers)	£7

Trainers suitable for sport	Required	No	Available from regular retailers	N/A
North Kesteven Academy grey half-zip sweatshirt	Optional	Yes	Available from academy supplier	£15-£17
North Kesteven long sleeved grey PE top	Optional	Yes	Available from academy supplier	£16-19
Black tracksuit bottoms for PE/Dance	Optional	No	Available from regular retailers	N/A

Items that are not allowed for school uniform:

The following items are not allowed to be worn on the school site:

Any visible items of clothing except those listed above including: -

- Patterned or casual-style/informal white shirts
- Shorts
- leggings (except as described above for PE/Dance)
- tracksuit bottoms (except as described above for PE/Dance)
- tight fitting trousers
- denim
- jeans-style, combat-style or cargo-style trousers
- chinos or corduroys.
- canvas shoes
- trainer-style Velcro fastening shoes
- Leather jackets
- hoodies
- zipped tops
- tracksuit tops
- non-school uniform sweatshirts

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child brings their PE kit to academy when needed.

Jewellery

The following items of jewellery are permitted:

- a watch
- one plain stud in the lower lobe of each ear for pierced ears

No other piercing, including top of ear, nose, eyebrow or tongue is permitted. Ear 'stretchers' 'spacers' or 'tunnels' are also not permitted. (Please note: we would require any unauthorised piercings to be removed and that it is not permissible to cover these up or wear a clear 'spacer' in place of the piercing.)

Students will be advised that jewellery is their personal responsibility and not that of the academy. Lost or damaged items will not be refunded. All jewellery must be removed during practical lessons, including PE lessons.

Bags

Students must use an appropriately-sized waterproof bag to carry their books and equipment. It must hold A4-sized workbooks comfortably without causing any damage.

Academy bags featuring inappropriate images, slogans or phrases will not be permitted.

The academy will discourage students from bringing valuable bags to academy. The academy will not be liable for lost or damaged bags.

Hairstyles and headwear

The academy reserves the right to make a judgement on whether a student's hairstyle, hair colour or headwear is inappropriate for the academy environment; however, the academy will ensure that any such judgements do not discriminate against any student by virtue of their protected characteristics. Each individual student's scenario will be taken into account where any judgements on appropriateness are to be made, and parents will always have the freedom to complain via the academy's Complaints Procedures Policy.

Students with long hair must ensure that this does not impede their vision, cover their face, or cause a health and safety risk. Long hair must be tied up during practical lessons, e.g. during PE.

The following hairstyles, hair colours and headwear are not considered appropriate for academy:

- Brightly-coloured dyed hair
- Headwear with bold patterns or colours
- Excessive hair accessories
- Headwear featuring inappropriate words or images

Makeup and cosmetics

The academy rules on makeup and cosmetics are as follows:

- Only natural-looking makeup is permitted
- Coloured nail varnish, gels, shellac, acrylics or false or extended nails of any kind are not permitted.

- False eyelashes will not be permitted – this includes both disposable strip lashes and individual semi-permanent lash extensions.
- Permanent and temporary tattoos are not permitted

Students wearing excessive makeup will be required to remove it.

12. Adverse weather

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

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

For cold temperatures, this includes wearing:

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

13. Labelling and lost property

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

Any lost clothing will be taken to the lost property office. All enquiries about lost property should be directed to student reception. All lost property will be retained for one month and will be disposed of if it is not collected within this time.

14. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by governing board. The next scheduled review date for this policy is July 2025.

The academy will engage with parents and students when reviewing this policy.

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