

The Kimberley School Uniform Consultation

Thank you to those of you who took the time to feedback to us on the proposed changes to the uniform. The consultation was sent to parents and carers of over 1150 students – including those who have been offered places in Year 7 for September 2018. In total we received 57 responses.

Senior Leaders also explained the proposals in assemblies for students in Years 7,8,9 and 10. Students were given an email address to send their views and they were reminded of this in Student Notices. In total we received 4 responses.

After considering the views and questions from parents, carers and students; governors agreed these changes to the Uniform Policy that will take place from September 2018.

The Kimberley School Skirt

This will be introduced from September 2018. Girls who choose not to wear the skirt can wear trousers as long as they are in line with the guidelines that were shared in the consultation. We will write to parents and carers during the summer term to set out where the Skirt can be bought from and when the “pop-up uniform shops” will be in school.

Year 11

In September 2018 Year 11 (current Year 10) will still be able to wear other school skirts as long as they are in line with the guidelines set out in appendix 1. Every subsequent Year 11 will have to wear the Kimberley School Skirt. Students in Year 11 in September 2018 will be able to wear the Kimberley School Skirt if they choose to.

Cost

Many parents expressed concerns that they would have to replace perfectly good school skirts in September 2018 with the Kimberley School Skirt. In order to help mitigate this cost we have agreed with the suppliers that we will operate a voucher scheme which will give parents a £5 discount for a Skirt purchased before 1st September 2018. This will not apply to the starter packs which already have the discount built in. We will explain separately to parents how they can claim this £5 discount.

School Jumper

Many parents raised the idea of an optional V-neck school jumper that could be worn underneath the school blazer. We are currently exploring this as an option and will write to parents and carers if this is something we do adopt.

Enclosed on the next few pages of this document is a summary of the consultation and our responses to the issues that were raised. Uniform is an important part of school life. It creates an equality across all students and helps them prepare for a working life. A smart uniform that is worn correctly can instil a sense of pride in all students about themselves and the school that they attend. As a result of good support from parents and carers the vast majority of students at Kimberley wear the uniform well. We believe that these changes will further improve the way the uniform is worn at Kimberley. Thank you to those of you who have engaged in this consultation and for your continued support in working with us on this matter.

Andrew George
April 2018

Summary of Responses and Questions

The views of those who responded covered the full spectrum of views from fully supportive to vehemently opposed to the proposals. However, a significant proportion of respondents either agree with the proposals or that there was a problem that needed tackling. Below are an example of some of the supportive comments.

I am writing to say I am in support of bringing in a new school skirt.

I agree that the skirts that some pupils wear are way too short!

Parents are often caught between school rules and their daughters wanting to follow fashion. If you are specifying a particular skirt it would avoid this

I am often shocked by how short some of the girls choose to wear their school skirts

I totally fully back the school changing the uniform and the girls school skirt, especially with my daughter starting in September, despite the cost difference

I think many girls are wearing school skirts that are too short and do not look smart enough and I would support the plan to introduce a standard school skirt alongside the option for girls to wear trousers

I totally agree with the policy you are wanting to bring in regarding the girls School Skirt

For many years I have observed the girls' skirts being worn at an inappropriate length and am pleased something is finally being done about this.

I am in full agreement with the skirt change. It will save many arguments in a morning!

This is an excellent idea. The school should have gone with the tartan last year. Just go for it. My daughters' skirt is too short

I agree completely with the reasons you are making the change for as at present most of the skirts you see the pupils wearing are too short. This does not give a good impression of the school and I think you are right in saying that this is the only way to combat this to enforce a new item of school uniform.

I believe this would eradicate other issues such as peer pressure and the ongoing battle girls have with their image

This new uniform proposal was mentioned once before but sadly to no avail! I really hope the school takes a stance and goes in this direction .. this is something I feel very strongly about and feel it is not enforced enough through most schools. You would have my full support

Absolutely love it!!!! About time something was done about this. I agree it is a complete waste of staff time discussing skirt length with pupils

It is very difficult to insist on a certain type of school skirt from home when others at school do not wear knee length skirts, this new rule will ensure that everyone is the same, with the option of trousers if the girl does not want a skirt.

We are 100% in agreement with the proposed changes to the skirt type for girls uniform

I think the proposed changes are a positive move and the prices of the skirts much more reasonable than the previous consultation a few years ago.

Below is a summary of some of the comments from parents who did not support the proposals:

I strongly urge you to reconsider this course of action on the grounds of affordability and enforceability.

I would like to express my concern that your proposal is a response to complaints from some members of the public and some parents who appear to have sexualized the bodies of teenage girls. As the parent of a young woman I face the relentless task of empowering my daughter to understand that she is more than just her body and, despite the messages society bombards her with, she is not a sexual object.

I would fully support not having a uniform for the school across all age ranges, as is the policy of the sixth form.

I think when considering the change to school skirts thought needs to be given to; Who the changes are for? What the impact will be? What will be the emotional/self-confidence effect on the students?

The proposed cost of the new skirt is far too high and I think parents of girls moving into year 11 in September will be extremely reluctant to pay this. I certainly will.

I think whatever skirt the girls wear they will roll them up, as they do now.

As uniform is expensive enough I don't feel the girls should be penalised for the ones who don't follow correct uniform

Making children of less fortunate backgrounds purchase more uniform is out of order. Kimberley school is not a private school and not all parents are on a satisfactory wage too. If you feel the need to make changes then it should be at the cost of the school.

Instead I suggest that any girls attending the school who arrive with a skirt above their knees, are sent home to change into an appropriate length skirt

Whilst I understand your desire to manage the length of skirts worn, I am not sure the proposed solution will entirely achieve this. Even when bought the correct length skirt girls roll the top over to reach their desired length. Enforcing a school skirt will not stop this

With regards to your uniform consultation, a school should spend far more time educating our children than wasting so much time, money & effort on what shade of black shoes, trousers, skirts etc the kids wear! how utterly ludicrous that you choose to chase this line of schooling rather than spending time helping children achieve higher/take more from their school lives than wasting our time harping on about this. a few of your teachers are absolutely fantastic, although it is apparent that several of the higher authority teachers live in the distant past & have axes to grind

My School used to get the girls to line up and if the skirt wasn't long enough a letter would be sent home for parents to purchase a new more appropriate skirt, if the problem persisted we would have detentions/ isolation etc.

A number of questions and concerns were raised by parents and below is a summary of the recurring themes throughout the feedback.

The cost of the Skirt is too much especially for families with more than one daughter. The Starter Pack isn't useful to everyone.

There is no compulsion for girls to wear a Skirt but if they do choose to do so then they will have to wear a Kimberley School Skirt. If parents are worried about the cost of the skirt, then they will be able to buy school trousers at a more reasonable cost as long as they fall within the schools' guidelines.

Could you approach a different retailer for a better discount in view of the business that they will attract?

We will explore this with other retailers and will make parents aware later in the term of where the Skirt can be purchased from.

There were some concerns about the appearance and quality of the new skirt.

We think that the new skirt is of high quality, looks good and is comfortable. From May we will display an example of the skirt in the main school reception for parents and students to look at.

Girls will just wear trousers instead of the skirt.

This is, of course, a viable option and one that many girls choose now. The new guidelines are intended to help parents and carers in ensuring that trousers are in line with school policy.

Would it not be better to give parents the choice and freedom to purchase the school skirts from a suitable outlet but give guidelines on the required length and style of skirt acceptable at Kimberley? Why not let us just purchase the logo to sew on?

This is, in effect, the position we find ourselves in now and it is our view that this would not solve the matter that we have identified.

A small number of parents felt that the change will be detrimental to girls' confidence. The focus should be on girls growing up with a positive attitude and not self-conscious and constrained.

This is complex issue. However, the number of parents who felt that the change would be detrimental to girls' confidence were outnumbered by those who felt that the change to the Kimberley School Skirt would have a positive impact on body image and confidence.

The school should put more effort into Personal and Social Education.

We run an extensive programme of Personal, Social and Health education and we always keep this under review in order to address any issues that are emerging among our students.

Some parents expressed a concern that girls will roll the skirt up to adjust the length.

The fit of the skirt is such that it cannot comfortably be rolled up and if it is the school logo will not be visible. The consultation set out how we will continue to deal with any student who does not wear any aspect of the uniform correctly.

There were some concerns that some girls would wear another skirt to the correct length and the school will not notice there is no logo

The consultation set out what would happen in this instance.

The school should just deal with girls who arrive with a skirt above their knees. There should be appropriate sanctions, girls should just be sent home.

Over the years the school has invested a significant amount of time in doing this. As was set out in the consultation we are no longer prepared to invest time that could be better spent teaching or providing pastoral support in doing this. Like all public services we are facing significant budget pressures and we are not prepared to invest significant resources and time in this.

Will there be some leeway for children with a Special Educational Need that causes them difficulties wearing specific items of clothing with a certain texture and feel?

Yes. We are aware that this is an issue for some students with a Special Educational Need or Disability and as is the case now we will work with individual parents to make reasonable adjustments to the uniform policy in these instances.

Would you consider allowing the students to wear an additional layer of a cardigan or jumper under their blazer. This could be specified to be plain black and V-neck so that the tie is still clearly visible but would allow them to be warmer in the winter.

This was raised by a number of parents in the consultation and is something that we have looked at before. We are happy to explore introducing a school V-neck jumper with a logo as an **optional item of the uniform**. We will work with our suppliers to explore if this is something that we can introduce at a later point.

Students should be able to take their blazers off when they sit down in a class

This is a decision we leave to individual teachers and what is most appropriate in their classroom. Students can take their blazers off if the teacher gives them permission.

A number of parents asked why we are withdrawing boots as an option for footwear in the cold weather?

From September 2018 boots will not be a part of normal school footwear. When the weather is poor we do appreciate that some students may want to wear boots when they walk to school but they should change into acceptable schools when they arrive. In very unusual weather conditions like we had earlier this year we will suspend the policy on shoes and alert parents and students through the usual communication methods.

Can we introduce a school tracksuit for PE?

This is not something that we are considering at the moment but it is something that we will keep under review in the future.

Other questions

Will the skirt have an elasticated waist for comfort? Yes, the skirt comes with internal elastic

Will my daughter be able to try the skirt on before we buy? Yes, you can do this in store or at the pop up shops.

Will skirts be exchanged if sizing isn't suitable? Yes, as with all uniform it can be exchanged if all the labels are still attached and unworn

What will girls do whose waist is below 22 inches? Below Waist 22" is a junior range.

Will the skirt sizes go up to plus size 22-24"? Yes, the skirt is sold in waist sizes for example 22" 24" 26" 28" all way through to 44" which covers the full size range.

Student Consultation

The issues raised by the three students who responded to the consultation were:

- The cost of the skirt was high
- That there should be more flexibility over which skirt can be worn

Both of these issues were raised by parents and our response is set out elsewhere in this document.