

## Summary of all key communication to parents about uniform since 23/11/2022

23.11.2022	Invitation to attend Parents' focus group	Uniform mentioned explicitly	"There's a huge disconnect between school policy and how pupils are dressing - how do we close the gap?"
05.12.2022	Reminder that the focus group going ahead the next day		6 parents booked. 4 parents attended.
04.01.2023	Headteacher news	PE entitlement and clothing mentioned explicitly	"We will not be returning to changing for PE in school this year – but when your child has indoor PE, they could wear shorts under their jogging bottoms so that they're able to quickly remove their tracksuit completely if it makes them more comfortable."
Between February and April, pupils were consulted, and a working party formed to amend policy and take to Local Governing Board where it was passed. Because of low-parent turnout at focus group – an opportunity to feedback again was given before this – see below.			
22.06.2023	Uniform Policy	New policy shared explicitly	"The attached policy reflects common sense as well as high expectation. Too many pupils have become used to bending the rules so <b>we will begin enforcing this from September 2023</b> . The policy has been verified by the Local Governing Board and is not due for review for 12 months. However, if you have any questions, you can post them here: <a href="#">Uniform Policy Questions and Comments</a> ."
20.07.2023	Uniform Policy	Parents have over 1 month to feedback – this email was to spark further feedback before forms closed.	Footwear was the key issue at this point. There were 7 responses in total. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trainers for PE – can they be blue?</li> <li>2. Tamworth pre-loved uniform needs a plug.</li> <li>3. Boots for winter – acceptable?</li> <li>4. Trainers for PE – why just black or white?</li> <li>5. Boots for winter – acceptable?</li> <li>6. Do stud earrings only need to be removed for swimming and PE?</li> <li>7. Trainers for PE are expensive</li> </ol>
19.09.2023	Headteacher's Updates	Explicit section on uniform because only 11 people responded in total to date – but made aware it is an issue of contention for some parents.	School rule for <b>ready</b> repeated, policy shared again. Winter uniform heralded. Reasonable adjustments for ties considered and flagged.
27.09.2023	Parent Feedback Opportunity – headings given	We would like feedback on the following: our new website, communication procedures, our social-media pages, <b>uniform</b> , attendance and punctuality, allergens and healthy eating policies, behaviour, parking and road safety, home learning.	64 replies, 6 regarding uniform. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Don't believe in shirts and ties.</li> <li>2. You said you'd be strict on uniform and (parent) has spent a lot of money – enforce it.</li> <li>3. Good to see updated uniform policy, would be good to see it actioned as I haven't seen any enforcement in the past.</li> <li>4. I have found updates and expectations around uniform to be fair and realistic - thank you.</li> <li>5. The word 'ideally' for logo items puts pressure on parents and local supplier is expensive.</li> <li>6. I think the new school uniform and appearance policy is very clear and it's been good to see that, for the most part, children have been kitted out correctly this term. Please do continue to promote the Tamworth pre-loved uniform market</li> </ol>
05.10.2023	Feedback on Feedback sent		
16.11.2023	Uniform Policy	Final Letter to parents	No feedback until <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers signalling to pupils 20/11/2023 expectations.</li> <li>• Letters of compliance sent to parents.</li> </ul>

**23 November 2022 at 16:38 SUBJECT – Invite to Parent Focus Group:**

Dear Parents,

This is to reschedule our first Focus Group which was postponed due to my absence. If you responded then, please respond again.

To remind you:

I want to gather a group of up to 30 parents (at a time) as a focus group for several key parts of our school improvement plan.

**The proposed date for the first one is Tuesday 6th December at 4pm - booking link below.**

This will pave the way for the Parents' Forums that used to run in the past but aren't quite the same:

- I expect it will last up to (but no more than) 90 minutes - including refreshments.
- There is a clear, pre-set agenda (see below)
- It is not the place for personal issues to be raised or debated.
- It is a combination of information sharing and consultation (whereas Forum will be more parent-led)

The first agenda is:

- Rules and Values - I want the focus group to help me define the school's values, or 'virtues' as we'll be calling them: 45 minutes workshop.
- Home Learning - I want to set out my philosophy and open the debate about what parents want - believe me when I say we won't solve it - I just want to gauge the temperature! 20 minutes
- Uniform - There's a huge disconnect between school policy and how pupils are dressing - How do we close the gap? 20 minutes

If you would like to come, sign up at this link here: [Sign Up for Parent Focus Group](#) - it takes one minute.

- If you book a place and can't make it - please let me know - the room I'll use, and refreshments depend upon numbers.
- There will also be a feedback form after the group so if you can't make it, your opinions can still be heard.

Thanks for your time.

David Shakeshaft, EHT

Dear Parents, just to confirm that the Parent Focus Group will still be going ahead tomorrow, **Tuesday 6th December at 4.00pm**. Mr Shakeshaft will meet you all in the Main School Foyer.

Many thanks,  
School Office

**Sent 04 Jan 2023 14:17**

Parents,

Happy New Year – welcome back. It was good to meet and greet so many families this morning and see so many smiling children.

It's a busy term. We have 32 days of learning this half-term and each one needs to count.

**Children finish school on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February and return Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February.**

### **Physical Education**

Your children are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum. From Key Stage 1, pupils should receive at least 90 minutes of PE per week under our new Dosthill framework – we want to be accredited as a **Healthy School\*** and this is a part of the criteria. Moreover, we've an obligation to your children to develop their physical and mental wellbeing.

Most of you are now aware that this means **two PE lessons a week** (unless your child is at swimming).

The lessons are **indoor and outdoor** each week. Most classes' **indoor** lessons this term focus on **dance**, as this has been a neglected area of our curriculum.

We will not be returning to changing for PE in school this year – but when your child has indoor PE, they could wear shorts under their jogging bottoms so that they're able to quickly remove their tracksuit completely if it makes them more comfortable.

- **Going forward, I will make sure our PE leader and class teachers communicate in advance what will be studied each half-term and the appropriate kit pupils will need.**
- **We are currently updating our entire uniform policy and PE kit will be a clear part of that.**

### **\*A Healthy School:**

- *Is one that promotes physical, social, emotional, and mental health and helps equip pupils, staff and families with the skills and attitudes to make informed decisions about their health.*
- *Is successful in supporting pupils to do their best and build on their achievements; it is committed to ongoing improvement and development.*
- *Recognises the importance of investing in health and wellbeing to assist in the process of raising children and young people's achievement levels.*
- *Involves the whole school community, parents, governors, staff, and pupils in improving children's health, wellbeing, and happiness, helping them to get the most out of life.*

**22 June 2023 at 11:46 (Policy was attached) SUBJECT - NEW SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY:**

Dear Parents,

We have a refreshed uniform policy. It is attached and is on our website. Please read it in full, but I want to highlight a few things. Firstly, it has been thought about with affordability and availability first in our minds. Secondly, I hope it gives some sensible freedoms within our expectations. Finally, because of the first two points, we will be expecting pupils and families to closely follow the rules. Incorrect uniform could be classed as misbehaviour in some cases.

Some of the changes you'll see in the policy (you will have to read it all to spot them all):

- We now only ask for smart hairstyles that make children feel comfortable – but shaved lines and dyed hair remain unacceptable and long hair should be frequently tied back (so children should be able to do that on their own or come to school with it tied by)
- Religious or cultural symbols may be exempt from the jewellery rules – by negotiation with the Executive Headteacher (me!)
- Other reasonable adjustments may be made for certain pupils -fair isn't everyone getting the same, fair is everyone getting what they need.
- Put your child's full name in everything so we can get it back to them.
- Black school shoes only (Kingsbury High School have a good illustration of what we mean on their website - [HERE](#))
- No trainers except for Physical Education
- Trainers for Physical Education must be plain black or white – not AstroTurf boots for example.
- T-Shirts for Physical Education must be plain, could have a school logo, but can't be football tops etc.
- In winter, coats should be warm and waterproof, and a waterproof in the summer – we go out in light showers because pupils don't shrink, and head colds are not caused by the cold and rain.
- Stud earrings are the only acceptable jewellery and must be taken out for key lessons – the six.
- Pupils in Reception classes can wear white polo shirts instead of shirts and ties year-round.
- Pupils in the other years now have more options for summer wear, including plain polo shirts (preferably white or green) and tailored shorts.
- The six weeks holiday is the best time to allow new piercings to heal so studs can be removed for school.
- We have a new set of written expectations for pupils, staff, and parents.

The attached policy reflects common sense as well as high expectation. Too many pupils have become used to bending the rules so we will begin enforcing this from September 2023. The policy has been verified by the Local Governing Board and is not due for review for 12 months. However, if you have any questions, you can post them here: [Uniform Policy Questions and Comments](#).

The new policy will help Dosthill pupils become ready, respectful, and responsible.

Yours faithfully, David Shakeshaft, EHT

**20 July 2023 at 17:12 (Policy was attached) SUBJECT - UNIFORM POLICY 2023-2024:**

Dear Parents,

We had seven pieces of feedback regarding uniform, and I will get in touch with those that requested it in person as well.

However, there are some points that I would like to make more widely here too.

In all the points below, the common advice would be that if you are in any doubt – ask! We have put a lot of parents' minds at rest these last few weeks.

The key ingredients we will add when operating the policy are common sense and understanding.

**Footwear**

1. What the policy says:

“Required: plain black shoes with no logo - canvas shoes, sports trainers, fashion shoes -including boots etc. - are not acceptable”.

- ‘No logo’ – even Clarks add a name stamp to their shoes! Asda do some sturdy shoes with Sonic the Hedgehog logos and heart-shaped logos stamped into the leather. ‘No logo’ refers to the type of more obvious sports branding that makes the shoes almost a trainer in disguise– but even Nike (for example) do some smart black shoes that look like shoes and not trainers. Do ask if unsure of what is appropriate and what is not.
- Fashion boots are not acceptable, a lot of boots may be (especially in winter) – I wear 6 to 8 eyelet black boots myself a lot of the year. Again, ask if unsure of what is appropriate and what is not.

1. What the policy says:

“Required: black or white trainers (*that are different from daily school shoes*) for PE activities that require them.”

- ‘Trainers’ –this means trainers, not pumps or plimsolls.
- A quick internet search of ‘trainers for school’ brings up a range of options and prices.
- Splashes of colour or branding will be inevitable when you’re trying to get a good fit - avoid bright green trainers if you can.
- Make sure the trainers are suitable for a physical activity indoors and out.

I have attached the full policy as our website is getting an upgrade and overhaul this summer – it should be much more user-friendly after that.

It’s been great seeing you all when I get the chance – you’ll appreciate that there’s a lot an Executive Headteacher does that you don’t get to see – and things are very busy right now.

Yours faithfully, David Shakeshaft, EHT.

## **19 September at 15:45 Headteacher's Updates**

Parents,

Here is the plain-text version of the interactive newsletter you can find on our website, [www.dosthill.org](http://www.dosthill.org) under newsletters.

### **Allergies, Snacks, and Healthy Eating**

The Trust have a Healthy Lunchbox and Snack Policy you will find here: [Healthy Lunchbox and Snack](#).

We also have an Allergen Policy you will find here: [Allergen Policy](#).

Allergies are increasing in primary school children. Our responsibilities are growing. My job is to protect our pupils and our staff. Please read the policies above, because I am going to outline some new approaches that I know will cause grumbles - but all the reasons you need are in those policies.

Staff at school will no longer hand out any edible / consumable birthday treats on your child's behalf. You are welcome to hand them out yourselves to other parents and carers as pupils are collected. They should still be factory wrapped and clearly labelled with full ingredients. If it's homemade - please do it outside of school.

Nothing handed out is to be consumed on the school premises.

Consider, perhaps, buying a nice book for the class instead. It can often cost the same or be cheaper, and we can put book plates in the covers to commemorate the occasion.

Snacks for breaktime should follow the healthy guidance above, you'll find it on page 4. Please be mindful that:

Items containing nuts are strictly not allowed.

Chocolate and chocolate covered items are not allowed.

Drinks should not be fizzy.

Energy drinks are not allowed. \*

The Trust allows sugar-free squash instead of water in bottles.

Children can refill water bottles with water throughout the day, but they can't bring their own, undiluted squash.

*\*Prime hydration and the like were a big thing last summer. If you want a drink to be isotonic for lunchtime, there are cheap ways of doing this with a dash of fruit juice and a pinch of salt. Children primarily want these drinks for the 'clout' of being seen with them - that's not something we want to encourage in our character development curriculum.*

### **Rules, Routines, and Rituals**

In September 2022, we introduced a new set of routines for the safe drop-off and delivery of pupils to Dosthill - the previous arrangements a hangover from Covid19 restrictions (and very unsafe). They took time to bed-in. Feedback was all about how they weren't working and wouldn't work. Fast-forward to September 2023, and it's been necessary to change again. Now people refer to those 2022 routines as the ones that worked well. I have no doubt that the new routines will fall into habit and be the good ones soon enough.

The priorities in the mornings and evenings are:

The safe, controlled handover of your children into and out of our duty of care to a responsible adult

Punctuality in the mornings - children in school by 8.45am. (If it's close to 8.50am the gates are still open to clear parents, not act as an entry point, so we'll direct you to the offices for signing in)

Maximising learning in afternoons - this means opening gates at 3.10pm and not starting dismissal until 3.15pm

[You can find a printable calendar and guide to school timings by clicking on this sentence - you'll go straight to our new website.](#)

## **Uniform**

Labelling items has got a lot better - so getting that new stuff returned is similarly improving. It was a surprise when I started here just how many personal items wound up in lost property, never to be claimed. Lost property is at the front of the school. To be honest, it's not the first thing I want visitors to see - and we'll be moving it at some point this year.

A couple of school rules we have, under the 'ready and respectful banners are:

We have the right clothes and equipment each day (*this is really a rule for you as parents, not the pupils*).

We look after equipment and share it.

We need to teach pupils to respect one another's belongings and respect the rules.

Our uniform policy is really straightforward - you can find it here [on this dedicated page of our website](#).

Now the sunshine has passed, we will be asking for the summer uniform to be retired by Monday 6th November at the latest. If you're having trouble affording a tie (for Year 1 upwards) - do let us know in confidence.

## **Equipment and Personal 'Stuff'**

Whilst we're embedding high expectations, we need to put a temporary halt on all extra 'stuff' from home. Don't worry - it can return in an organised and supervised way, but right now we don't want to see things like trading cards, bracelet making kits, giant pencil cases and colouring books, small toys etc.

We do not confiscate these items, but we ask pupils to return items to bags or drawers and take them home that evening.

Once we've seen a healthy respect for school equipment and each other's property, we'll return to organising clubs and allowing these additional items in school.

## **New Build Walk-Through and Official Opening**

I had hoped to open the building to allow parents and families to walk through and see the new classrooms this week after school. A combination of poor weather and an increase in certain bugs doing the rounds (one digestive, the other respiratory) means this is slightly delayed.

We still aim to do our official opening towards the middle of October – please see the main September newsletter for further details.

## **September Temperature Check – Parent Feedback and Views.**

Sent By: Mr David Shakeshaft

**Sent 27 Sep 2023 11:22**

Dear all,

Can you believe September is almost over? As you know, your partnership in school is key. Your feedback and views matter. If we don't know about them, we can't consider them. We have a social-media presence where some things are shared - but this has a limited reach. I know a lot of parents enjoy being part of parental WhatsApp groups - but nothing from these channels is read or acted on at school. Therefore, it's good to have a lot of official ways to get your views across.

Below is a link to this month's survey. We would like feedback on the following: **our new website, communication procedures, our social-media pages, uniform, attendance and punctuality, allergens and healthy eating policies, behaviour, parking and road safety, home learning.**

We will not accept anonymous feedback as, unfortunately, this system was abused by a minority last year.

We can only accept one form per item of feedback - this is for administrative purposes - but you can submit as many forms as you like - one for each top if you so wish. There is also space for anything else you'd like to raise at the bottom of the form.

Please do not use feedback to raise issues or concerns about your child specifically - go directly to the class teacher / safeguarding lead / senior leader via the office.

We look forward to hearing your views.

LINK: [SUBMIT YOUR VIEWS HERE](#)

Sent By: Mr David Shakeshaft

**Sent 29 Sep 2023 09:52**

Good morning, all,

This is to let you know that September's survey closes at 9am Monday. It will be discussed at the school's senior leadership meeting at 4pm and then *some* anonymised comments shared with the school's Curriculum and Standards governors on 10/10/2023.

Some comments will be fully redacted, as they do not meet the criteria or brief laid out below and on the form itself. The vast majority, however, are useful in many ways and we thank you for taking the time to compose them.

Yours sincerely,

**Sent 05 Oct 2023 14:44**

Dear Parents,

It was great to see so much feedback. The relationships between parents and staff in school cements our shared ambitions to ensure that we all work together in the best interests of our children. There's always room for improvement. Things are always evolving. Attached is a summary document of useful or positive points and our responses to them.

We'll do this twice more before Christmas - but the range of topics will be more limited. Some in-person meetings will also follow.

Have a pleasant evening and thank you once again for your partnership.

Yours sincerely,

David Shakeshaft, EHT.

	Uniform
6 responses plus some feedback in 'other comments'	
<i>You said...</i>	<i>School replies...</i>
"I still don't believe primary children should be wearing short and ties. It's very uncomfortable for them. Polo shirts and jumpers are the way forward. They are kids let them be kids."	Thank you. Polo shirts and jumpers are now a feature for warmer weather. The policy was created from parent polls, a parent focus group and shared with the local governing board. It will be reviewed again in July 2024.
"You told me how strict you were going to be with uniform, I spent over £X getting everything the kids needed with logos, even down to the P.E kits for kids just to be coming in normal tracksuits from home."	Thank you. The uniform policy is here: <a href="#">Dosthill Primary Academy - Uniform and Appearance</a> – we will be following up anything not in the policy with the parents, as signposted in a recent HT newsletter.
"Good to see updated uniform policy, would be good to see it actioned as I haven't seen any enforcement in the past. Some ( <i>pupils</i> ) wear summer dresses/gingham play suits all winter as they don't like ties."	Thank you. We will be following up anything that doesn't conform to the policy with parents. The word 'enforcement' carries connotations that don't really fit with a primary school. In most cases, there's usually a reason beyond 'don't agree with rules.'
"I have found updates and expectations around uniform to be fair and realistic - thank you."	Thank you – fair, realistic, and affordable are the goals.
"The suppliers which sell the official school uniform with logo/insignia are very expensive compared to some that other local schools use. We are aware that the insignia is not 'required' but the word 'ideally' in the policy applies a certain amount of pressure to purchase at least some of these items. It would be helpful if they could be made available at a more affordable price in future. Purchasing trainers (rather than plimsolls) as well as good quality school shoes was also quite expensive, especially for young children whose feet grow so quickly. One of the official uniform suppliers was still advertising plimsolls for Dosthill Primary too so this was a little confusing."	Thank you. We will review the supplier agreement as soon as possible. We will remove the word 'ideally' in July 2024 to remove inferred pressure. Trainers or bare feet are the most suitable for the full range of sporting activities in the primary school curriculum – but the point about much younger pupils will be reviewed with our PE leader and H&S guidance.
"I think the new school uniform and appearance policy is very clear and it's been good to see that, for the most part, children have been kitted out correctly this term. Please do continue to promote the Tamworth pre-loved uniform market on Facebook to the school family as support from each school is greatly appreciated."	Thank you. Affordability is key – there is a thriving market of free or low cost 'as new' uniform in Tamworth in case parents didn't know. We'll send details in a future newsletter.

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Dosthill Primary Academy Parent Feedback September 2023

"Overall, the uniform does look very smart and sets a high expectation for the children."	Thank you. It does – their appearance often gets compliments both in school and beyond. It instils a sense of pride.
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**16 November 2023 at 15:20 (Policy was attached) SUBJECT - UNIFORM POLICY:**

Dear Parents,

School photographs this week were interesting. There were a few pupils wanting to borrow ties, even though the vast majority should be wearing them daily. Some pupils were still in their summer clothes, despite a lot of communication about switching to winter uniform at the start of this half-term.

Here is a link to our uniform policy again on the website: [Dosthill Primary Academy - Uniform and Appearance](#). I will also attach it as a PDF to this email.

**We will never turn a child away from school because they're wearing incorrect uniform.**

**We will always make reasonable adjustments in consultation with parents where appropriate – a pupil's sensory needs as an example.**

However, it would be disappointing to have people try and take advantage of that. A policy is not a policy if it isn't adhered to and enforced – its guidance at best. Rules are the glue that hold community together.

From Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November we will gently begin to tackle uniform issues by writing to individual children's parents directly when we spot issues. There are several bigger issues currently:

1. Pupils only wearing track suits when PE is indoors and all kinds of colourful, logoed hoodies and fleeces creeping in. Policy states: we require plain black or green shorts for indoor PE; a plain coloured T-shirt matching your child's house colours (school logo optional); black or white trainers for PE activities that require them; plain grey, black, or green jogging bottoms (and tops) for outdoor PE. (Whilst school continues the practice of wearing PE kits to school on PE days, shorts may need to be worn under the jogging bottoms for indoor PE).
2. Trainers being worn instead of school shoes. Policy states: *plain black shoes with no logo - canvas shoes, sports trainers, fashion shoes -including boot - etc. are not acceptable.*
3. Children still wearing summer clothes and polo-shirts long after the advertised date of the winter uniform date.

Until it is next reviewed and consulted on (remember, consultation took place for *this* policy) – this is the policy in the place and policy that must be adhered to. When you remind yourself of it, you'll see there is plenty of scope for you to liaise with your child's teacher and a great deal of compromise to make the policy more flexible than it perhaps once was. There is nothing unreasonable in there.

For example – if you don't have plain grey, black, or green 'jogging' tops for PE days, your child can simply wear their sweatshirt or jumper. They'll take them off for indoor PE anyway!

One last note – if it isn't in the published policy, it isn't needed and shouldn't be in school. There is no mention of make-up in the school policy because there's simply no need for any primary school pupil to wear make-up to school on a regular basis. Please don't think that omission is acceptance – we simply strive to keep the policies as simple as a practical to apply as possible.

Thank you in advance for upholding our values of respect, cooperation, and the British value of the 'Rule of Law.'

Yours sincerely,

David Shakeshaft, EHT.