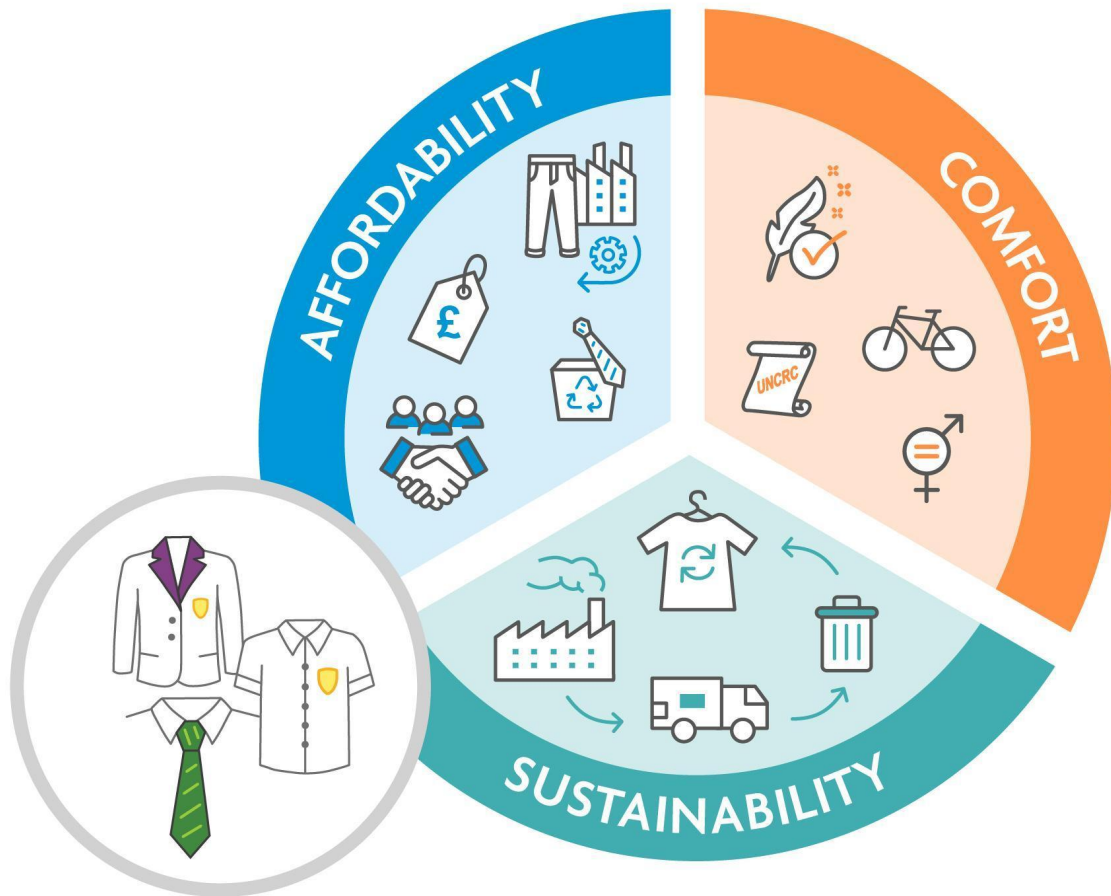


School Clothing: Framework for Action



By David Innes (Aberdeen for a Fairer World), Maxine Jolly & Mark Irwin (Education Scotland), Kirsty Campbell (Child Poverty Action Group) & Rachel Shanks (University of Aberdeen).

This guide offers a framework for school communities (learners, parents/ carers, staff, and Local Authorities) to use when considering and reviewing their school clothing and appearance policies.

It should apply not only to clothes worn in the classroom but also to other school clothing (e.g., items for PE, HE, crafts, clubs) and other occasions (e.g., dress up days, leaver hoodies, events off school premises, proms).

Why?

The framework asks us to think not only of the local impact of a policy but also at implications on a global scale. For example, a very cheap garment may have been produced in an exploitative and non-ethical way, using unsustainable materials which may not biodegrade.

Watch this provocation from a young person regarding school dress codes and appearance policies and the rights that can be impacted. Question answered by Ellie Scottish Youth Parliament member <https://www.tiktok.com/@young.scot/video/7166564439091645701> and by Maxine Jolly, Senior

How?

The framework asks us to think about school clothing under 3 main headings:

- **Affordable** - the costs to buy the items and the pay/conditions of those producing and disposing of the items.
- **Comfortable** - not only the look/ fit but also relating to stigma, beliefs, allergies etc.
- **Sustainable** - production, distribution, lifespan and wear, re-use, disposal.

Under each heading there is a list of key considerations/challenge questions and links to further reading, research, and guidance.

Affordable - cost to the consumer and fair for the producer	
Have you considered? ● Financial costs of uniform - is there an exclusive supplier arrangement or is there choice of suppliers. ● Level of local authority school clothing grant - is this at or above the national minimum and does it cover the actual overall costs. ● Costs of other school wear - including PE kit, what is worn to and from school. When we factor everything in what is the real overall cost to a family. ● Fair pay and conditions for producers - Pay, working conditions and rights issues linked to garment production. ● Lifespan of garments - the more times it can be used the more affordable it becomes. ● New, rented and re-used - consider uniform rental and exchanges.	Cost of the School Day toolkit updated 2023 https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/CoSD/toolkit Consultation around uniform affordability https://cpag.org.uk/policy-campaigns/cost-school-day/cost-school-day-ideas-bank/entitlements-and-financial-support Examples of schools promoting entitlements such as School Clothing Grant https://cpag.org.uk/policy-campaigns/cost-school-day/cost-school-day-ideas-bank/school-uniform-case-studies Approaches to affordable uniform policies and pre-loved clothing - uniform video https://youtu.be/kXjTWelwM_4 Talking about Costs and Money at School Resource, includes some examples of promoting entitlements https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/Talking%20about%20Costs%20and%20Money%20at%20School_1.pdf Child Poverty Action Group response to the Scottish Government consultation on national guidance https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/post/CPAG%20in%20Scotland%20national%20uniform%20policy%20guidance%20briefing%20.pdf A response to the national guidance in England https://cpag.org.uk/affordable-school-uniforms-guide Local Authority-wide approach to PE and activity wear https://cpag.org.uk/kit-all-dundee Dundee Kit for All Welsh Guidance (2023) including helpful comments on handling complaints and exclusions https://www.gov.wales/school-uniform-and-appearance-policy-guidance-governing-bodies-wg23-17-html

Affordable - cost to the consumer and fair for the producer	
	School Clothing Grant in Scotland Policy Briefing (2022) https://abdn.pure.elsevier.com/files/219977936/Shanks_2022_School_Clothing_Grant_in_Scotland_Policy_Briefing.pdf Are there any local contacts for clothes hire etc. (e.g., Clackmannanshire - https://www.styleoptions.org/ Supporting people with basic repairs e.g., see free tutorials from repair what you wear - https://repairwhatyouwear.com/

Comfortable - for rights, equality, diversity, health and wellbeing	
Have you considered? • Look and fit. • Ensuring dignity • Reducing stigma • Allergies • Equality Act 2010 including disability, sex, race, religion and philosophical beliefs • Inclusion • Additional Support Needs • UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (see below) • Inclusive of all genders	Safety - protection from the elements (UV, rain, snow etc.), visible in winter, and, where appropriate, making reasonable adjustments for disability so individuals feel a sense of comfort and safety in their surroundings. Reviewing School Uniform through a Public Health Lens https://doi.org/10.3389/phrs.2021.1604212 Comfort/ activity/ play - gender issues - https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2022.917970/full?journalName=Frontiers in Public Health&id=917970 UNCRC - https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/ Supporting transgender young people in schools guidelines https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-transgender-young-people-schools-guidance-scottish-schools/documents/ (page 29) Dignity in schools hub https://dignityinschool.childrensparliament.org.uk/# Research from Rachel Shanks including this blog. https://blog.eera-ecer.de/school-uniform-policy-in-scottish-schools-control-and-consent/

Sustainable	
Have you considered? • Sustainable production • Sustainable distribution	Bangladesh's clothing conundrum. BBC World documentary podcast looking at whether clothes can be sustainably produced and still remain affordable. https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct5hqr?dm_i=5EH4,TIFE,2MQIN4,3HO81,1

• Getting more wear out of usable uniforms. • Uniform exchanges and rental • Making pre-loved a positive behaviour. • Having an end-of-life path that is not giving other countries our landfill problem.	Facts about fast fashion from Oxfam - https://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam-in-action/oxfam-blog/new-shocking-facts-about-the-impact-of-fast-fashion-on-our-climate/ Unpckd research on the lifecycle of clothing. https://unpckd.com/blogs/lesseverydaywaste/what-a-waste-the-second-hand-school-uniform-no-brainer Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances in North American School Uniforms https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/acs.est.2c02111 Repair what you wear - mending tutorials https://repairwhatyouwear.com/ Ellen Macarthur trust resources - https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/environmental-costs-fast-fashion Textile mountain - the hidden burden of textile waste - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UC4oFmX8tHw
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UNCRC: Uniform/ dress codes and how they are developed and applied are covered by several articles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child:

Article 12 – Non-discrimination	Article 3 - Best interests of the child
Article 8 - Preservation of identity	Article 12 - Views of the child
Article 14 - Freedom of belief and religion	Article 19 - Protection from neglect
Article 23 - Support with disability	Article 26 - Social security
Article 28 - Right to education	Article 29 - Goals of education
Article 30 - Customs and religion	Article 31 - Leisure, play and culture
Article 42 - Knowledge of rights.	

Therefore, the framework leaves readers with two final considerations:

- How do you engage learners in school policy and how often is this re-visited?
- Do the policies and practices (e.g., how, and where a learner can get a spare uniform or other item of clothing) ensure that the dignity and rights of the individual are respected?

