



29 March 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

Introduction of the new uniform for September 2017

I wrote to you at the start of February regarding the introduction of our new uniform. I received five emails in response to this, questioning mainly the way we were intending to introduce the uniform rather than the uniform itself. As a result, we have consulted again with students in Year 10 and run an online survey of Year 10 parents and carers. We have also discussed this at Senior Leadersip Team meetings, and I am pleased now to be able to clarify arrangements for September.

Students currently in Years 7 to 9

We shall expect all students to be in both the new uniform and the new PE kit for the first day of September. We have budgeted for a contribution towards the introduction of the uniform, so we shall be giving all current students a voucher for £25 towards the cost. To put this into context, the most common sizes of children's blazers retail at £24 or £26. As this is a suit, you will have to purchase the trousers or kilt from Uniform Direct. However, plain white shirts or blouses with revere collar can be bought cheaply almost anywhere.

Students currently in Year 10

There were 68 responses to the online consultation, and the result was inconclusive. For example, 43% were in favour of keeping the current uniform... and 43% were against! Mindful of the comments in the survey and the emails from parents in response to my first letter about spending money (school or otherwise) on a short-term solution, we have adopted what we believe is a common sense approach.

Boys will wear the suit, but without the school badge. This means that they can continue to wear the suit after Year 11 if they wish. They should wear a white shirt, but the choice of tie will be down to them (within reason).

Girls will wear the trouser suit (without badge) with a white blouse with revere collar; they are not expected to wear a tie. They can choose to wear the kilt if they like, and we are going to ask the suppliers if they can source a matching grey skirt. Once again, this will provide them with a suit that they can wear beyond Year 11.

As with Years 8 to 10, we shall contribute £25 to the cost of the suit.

Students in Year 11 may continue to wear their current PE kits.

A note of warning to students currently in Year 9: this is a one-year solution. We are not setting a precedent, and you should expect to wear the full uniform in Year 11.

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We have considered many solutions for Year 11 next year, including continuing with the old uniform. However, wearing a uniform induces a sense of belonging (some responses from Year 10 parents/carers indicated that their child would feel left out if they were not in the new uniform). It is also about reinforcing expectations, and we feel that the Year 11 compromise allows us to do that.

This has been a lengthy consultation and we now believe that we have a workable solution moving forward. We had samples of the uniform available to view at the Year 7 Welcome Evening for new students and parents this week, and feedback on it was positive. We have had to return various items to Uniform Direct temporarily, but we intend to put it on display after Easter so that more students and parents/carers can see it.

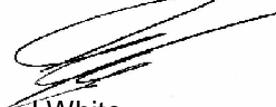
May I reassure you that throughout this process we have considered key factors such as durability and affordability. We discounted one supplier immediately on the grounds of cost alone. Feedback from parents regarding the service Uniform Direct provide is always positive, and that was an important consideration for us too.

Uniform Direct have offered to run a few "pop up shops" at the Elizabethan in the summer to make it easier for people to buy the new uniform, and we shall be in touch nearer the time with details.

Unrelated to uniform, may I remind you that we close for the Easter break at 3.20pm this Friday, although staff will be in school during the first week of term running revision sessions for Year 11. We re-open again after the Bank Holiday on Tuesday 18 April.

Advance notice: Friday 28 April is a staff training day, although we are also expecting many Year 11s to come in to revise and Retford Post 16 will be open as usual.

Yours sincerely



J White
Vice Principal