



Academy Uniform and Appearance Policy

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COVID-19 ADDENDUM (March 2021)

In line with Government guidelines, unless medically exempt, all pupils are expected to wear a face covering in lessons and when moving about the school site and when travelling on school or public transport. Face coverings should not contain any slogans or messages or images that could be interpreted as being offensive in any way. Please ensure your child/ren are provided with a suitable mask to wear.

Update for September 2022: As a school, we will continue to follow Government guidelines. Should the requirement for face masks be re-introduced, we will update parents and pupils accordingly and the COVID-19 Addendum will be re-instated. Face coverings are currently not required, though pupils are welcome to wear them if they wish to do so. If a pupil does have a minor illness eg. a cold, face coverings are a welcome way to protect others around them.

A. Background

Uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of the academy and setting an appropriate tone. Most schools and academies in England have a uniform or dress code, and other rules of appearance. The Governors of Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy believe it is important to have a uniform as it can instil pride; support positive behaviour and discipline; encourage identity with, and support for, academy ethos; ensure pupils of all races and backgrounds feel welcome; protect children from social pressures to dress in a particular way; and nurture cohesion and promote good relations between different groups of pupils. Uniform should also allow all pupils to be safe around the academy. Above all, Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy believes that the academy uniform supports effective teaching and learning.

There is no legislation that deals specifically with academy uniform or other aspects of appearance such as hair colour and style, and the wearing of jewellery and make-up. It is for the governing body to decide whether there should be a uniform and other rules relating to appearance, and if so what they should be. This flows from the duties placed upon the governing body by statute to conduct the academy and to ensure that academy policies promote good behaviour and discipline amongst the pupil body. The



Governors of Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy believe uniform does promote good behaviour and discipline.

B. Determining the Uniform Code

In determining the uniform in the past and when recommending any changes that might follow in the future the governors will seek the views of:

- Headteacher
- parents
- staff
- pupils, including the academy council

Their views will be considered and taken into account.

C. Needs of Individual Groups

When considering its decisions the governors have decided the needs of individual groups are outweighed by the following factors:

- Health and Safety: risk of injury, increased risk of bullying and harassment
- Security: the academy needs to be able to identify individual pupils in order to maintain good order and identify intruders easily;
- Teaching and learning: if a pupil's face is obscured for any reason, the teacher may not be able to judge their engagement with learning, and to secure their participation in discussions and practical activities;
- protecting young people from external pressure to wear clothing or hairstyles they would not otherwise choose to adopt, protecting them from harassment, and from having to adopt dress codes associated with extreme or anti-social elements in the wider community, including styles and colours of clothing associated with gangs;
- promoting a strong, cohesive, academy identity that supports high standards and a sense of identity among pupils: if some children look very different to their peers, this can inhibit integration, equality and cohesion;
- the need to promote harmony between different groups represented in the academy;

The academy will also consider carefully any request that is made to vary the policy to meet the needs of any individual pupil

- to accommodate their religion or belief;
- because of temporary or permanent medical conditions.

D. Cost of Uniform and its supply

Provision of uniform may be from any retailer willing to meet the precise demands of the code. Parents will be notified of those retailers offering uniform for sale. The



nature of the uniform and the material used were decided to maximise the life of garments whilst retaining smart looks, and the current material, quality and style, and is that chosen by the majority of parents, who expressed a view. Many items can be obtained from major retailers such as ASDA and TESCO.

E. The Academy Uniform Code

All Students

Caps/Baseball Hats may be worn outside only to protect against the sun.

On very cold days, winter hats to keep warm may be worn outside only, and only if they do not cover the face.

Hoodies are not allowed, under any circumstances.

Scarves may be worn outside the academy buildings, in cold weather.

Year 7 – 11

- Academy Blazer with embroidered academy badge
- Academy clip on tie (in year group colour)
- White shirt/blouse (with plain, white underwear underneath)
- Mid-grey pleated skirt deemed by the academy not to be excessive in any way (see notes); no lycra or straight skirts. Skirts must not be rolled up.
- Mid-grey tailored trousers - no kick flares or other fashion trousers; no lycra; no cropped trousers
- Plain black shoes (see below)
- Black or white ankle socks or plain black tights. Knee high socks are not allowed.

Optional Item

If required, a grey jumper, V-necked, long sleeved (with academy logo) may be worn under the blazer for extra warmth in the Winter and Spring terms.

PE Wear

Compulsory Items

- Black football shorts (Royal blue will still be allowed)
- White polo shirt (academy logo or plain white polo shirt)
- Trainers (no high tops or canvas shoes)
- Royal blue football socks
- Football boots (moulded studs)
- Shin pads
- PE Rugby shirt with (academy logo) - Boys only
- All jewellery must be removed for PE lessons

Optional Items

- Black/ Navy Blue tracksuit bottoms / leggings (no cotton legging)
- St Benedict PE hoody with academy logo - to be worn only in PE lessons
- Football boots (moulded studs recommended for boys)



Note -

- Trousers must not be charcoal or black. No kick flares or other fashion trousers.
- Skirts must have pleats but not splits. The required length of the skirt is knee length - skirts deemed by the Academy to be excessively short or long are not acceptable, on the grounds of smartness or Health and Safety. Skirts must not be rolled up.
- Footwear should be plain black, low heeled or flat shoes - not platform soles or stiletto heels. Boots may not be worn in the academy. Sports training shoes are not allowed except for PE.
- In particularly cold or wet weather, the academy will communicate when soft black boots are allowed. However, these are not in replacement of every day school shoes.
- Shirts must be tucked in, ties pulled up to the neck, and top button fastened.
- Coats - There is no alternative to the wearing of the academy blazer. The only coats allowed are plain top coats which can only be worn over (and not instead of) blazers.
- Belts, if required, must be plain black. Only those with small plain buckles are allowed.

The following items have been determined by Governors, in accordance with sections A, B and C above.

Hair

For health and safety reasons long hair must be tied back - both boys and girls. Hair must not have patterns, shapes or be dyed with bright or un-natural colours. Only natural hair colours are allowed. If in doubt, check with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher before having a cut/treatment. Any hairstyle or dress which, in the view of the Headteacher or her authorised representative, may cause others fear, or which may cause excessive comment or distress, will not be allowed, to help prevent bullying and support community cohesion.

In all cases shaved heads, except for medical reasons required by a medical doctor, are not permitted.

NOTE: Any issue of appearance that the academy believes will impact on the Health and Safety of the pupil concerned, or others, will not be allowed.

The uniform is wearing a blazer at all times, unless express permission has been given to remove it.

Makeup

Years 7-9 - No makeup at all is allowed. No false eyelashes.

Year 10 Upwards – Discreet, natural makeup is permitted.

Year 7 - 11 - Nail varnish or extensions are not permitted.



Jewellery

One flat smooth ring is allowed

Clear/see through nose studs may be worn. Alternatively a plaster may be worn to cover a nose piercing.

Flat earrings may be worn – one per ear. These must not be hoops or dangly earrings.

All jewellery must be removed during PE lessons for Health and Safety purposes

Religious symbols

The wearing of unobtrusive religious symbols, such as a cross or the Kara, will normally be allowed as a waiver to the policy on jewellery, provided that:-

- the item is an extremely important mark of faith.
- by wearing it, no pressure is brought on other pupils.
- it generally is not seen, because it is under other clothing.
- there is no health & safety risk.
- Permission for a waiver has been obtained in advance of it being worn, from the Headteacher, and permission granted in writing.

Valuables

These should be left at home. It is the parents' responsibility to arrange insurance for clothes and valuables. This includes mobile phones.

Mobile Phones and other electronic devices

In Years 7 to 11, mobile phones, personal music players and other unsuitable mobile phone devices are not allowed in the academy. If a student is seen with one of these items, it will be dealt with under the academy's discipline policy. The taking of photographs with phones or other devices is forbidden.

Bags

Pupils need a bag suitable for carrying exercise and text books. The bag should be large enough that these books are kept flat. Small pouch-like bags should not be bought, and bags must not be carried by a strap work around the neck with the bag loose. Straps must have an arm through them for health and safety reasons.

Years 12 & 13 Dress Code

The following items are considered suitable for wear in the academy and for travelling to and from the academy. Bold patterns, bright colours and bold logos are considered inappropriate, and must not be worn.

- Tailored plain jacket and matching tailored plain skirt or trousers or tailored suit - plain or thin pinstripe
- Collared plain shirt or blouse
- Tie with shirt (unless open collared)
- Smart shoes - trainers, canvas converse pumps, crocs, sliders, mules, flip-flops are not allowed.



Logos/slogans are not permitted on any item of clothing, apart from the academy badge.

All students **must** wear a security badge which includes a photograph, when required.

F. Religious dress and symbols

Discussions with parents and local religious leaders, and reference to case law and other guidance has led the governing body to make decisions on dress/religious symbols. It has used the definitions and guidance in Appendix A.

G. Responsibilities

It is the Head's responsibility to ensure that the governors' policy is implemented and maintained. The Head will also determine any questions of compliance with the code.

The Head may delegate particular responsibilities concerning academy uniform to members of staff. The Head will determine which staff may impose sanctions for non-compliance with academy uniform.

It is the duty of all staff to uphold the uniform standard and to report any non-compliance to the Head, or his authorised representative. Parents have a responsibility to ensure their child comes into the academy, dressed correctly. Students have responsibility to attend the academy, dressed in accordance with this policy.

H. Sanctions

If a pupil arrives in the incorrect uniform, they may be sent home to change, or offered uniform items held by the academy to wear for the day, so that they can meet the requirements. If sent home, this will not be an exclusion and the time at home will only be to enable the pupil to meet the demands of this code. This will be recorded as an authorised absence. The student should return to school as quickly as possible with the correct uniform. If the student does not return with correct uniform, this will be recorded as a unauthorised absence.

Refusal to wear correct uniform will be dealt with, as a disciplinary matter.

If a pupil leaves home and then deliberately amends what is worn to break the code, this will be dealt with, as a disciplinary matter.

Examples of sanctions that may be given for non-compliance with the academy uniform and appearance codes, are as follows:-

- first offence for minor matter such as a tie not worn properly or wearing earrings – warning on Expectation card
- second offence – short detention at break or lunchtime



- third offence – detention, parents will be contacted
- fourth offence – senior staff detention and a warning to parents about possible exclusion
- subsequent offences – exclusion as necessary and appropriate
- Non-uniform items that are brought into academy will be confiscated. If pupils have an item confiscated for a second time then parents may be asked to come to the academy to collect it rather than it being returned to the pupil. Pupils who come to academy in sports training shoes will have to change into a pair of academy shoes on arrival, provided by the academy.

I. Complaints

The academy's complaints policy will be followed. A copy can be found on the academy website or obtained from the Clerk to the governing body at the academy.

Normally, any complaints about academy uniform will be made in the first instance to a House Leader. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, the complaint should be brought next to the deputy and then the Headteacher. If still not resolved, it will be brought to the attention of the governing body through the Clerk to the Governing Body. The governing body's decision will be final.

J. Monitoring and review

The Head will report to the governing body at least once per year on the working of the policy, and will include in the report, the number of cases of non-compliance during the previous period, and the action taken.

Appendix A

Buddhism

In general there are no religious requirements for everyday dress for Buddhists.

Christianity

For the majority of Christians there are no particular dress requirements. In some Christian sects, such as the Plymouth Brethren women and girls are expected to wear headscarves and modest clothing.

- The two areas relating to Christianity are likely to be the wearing of a head covering and the wearing of a cross.
- The head covering in this respect, like the niqab in Islam) is distinctive of a few particular sects' interpretation of a religious teaching. Western versions of Christianity have more generally only enforced this restriction on nuns and (at some times in history) for women in church.



- The wearing of crosses is more difficult. Historically, the wearing of a cross was seen as idolatry by the stricter Protestant sects. It is sometimes given as a gift to girls on their entry into the church (confirmation). It is also sometimes worn simply as a fashion item.
- The wearing of a cross, however, has not been declared a religious obligation.

Hinduism

In general, it is not considered acceptable for a Hindu woman to have uncovered legs.

- There are no universal requirements on Hindus, though the wearing of religious marks on the forehead are part of tradition. Some traditions encourage the wearing of a headscarf for women. Some traditions encourage women to cover their legs.
- There are requirements for mourning (involving hair cutting for men) which may impact on the academy appearance requirements.

Judaism

Dress requirements vary with orthodoxy. For more orthodox Jews, women and girls are expected to keep the body covered and married women cover their hair. Boys and men often wear a skullcap.

- Jewish custom and religious law is somewhat divided. Many, but not all people of Jewish faith make no distinction of dress outside the synagogue.
- Orthodox Jews essentially follow the prescriptions laid down in the Torah. For men, this means that hair on the face must grow to the bend in the cheek bone. In Hasidic sects, this can mean wearing long side-burns or ringlets.
- Jewish custom mandates that men should cover their hair, either with a hat or with a yarmulke/yarmulkah/capel. Some Jewish men only cover their head when in synagogue, praying elsewhere, in Jewish study, or eating. Jewish law mandates that married women cover their hair, normally with a hat, headscarf or wig. Some women only do this in the synagogue or at religious occasions.
- Traditions of clothing differ depending upon the area in which they have developed. Hasidic Jews, for example, dress in accordance with a particular 18th

century Polish custom. The requirement to wear black was said to denote a more serious approach to life though it now has more symbolic significance. Amongst other Orthodox Jews, dress is more modern although some will dress more formally, such as wearing suits and hats. Different traditions exist between Ashkenazi (Eastern European) and Sephardic (Mediterranean) traditions.

- In addition, orthodox Jewish women will be expected to dress modestly. Apart from the requirement to cover the hair this includes, for example covering knees, chest, arms down to the elbows, as part of a general rule that 'clothing may be attractive but not attracting'.

Islam

The reason for young women beyond puberty wishing to wear full clothing is modesty; that is, not wishing to receive unnecessary attention.



Young women are appropriately modestly dressed, if they are wearing salwar kameez or jilbaab with headscarf. These should be plain and in academy colours (blue, grey or white). The academy tie should be visible at all times.

Men are expected to be covered from waist to knee in public places, many Muslim men may also choose to wear a cap, but this is not a compulsory religious requirement and not allowed in the academy.

Case law has established that the objective of avoiding pressure on other Muslim girls to wear the niqab was sufficiently important to justify limiting article 9 of the Human Rights Act, and the rule prohibiting the wearing of niqabs was considered to be rationally connected to it.

- It is important to recognise that Muslim traditions of the Indian sub-continent (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan) are different in significant ways from Arabic traditions. This also applies to an extent to African Muslim traditions. The situation is complicated by the international promotion by Saudi Arabia of a relatively recent tradition (Wahabi), backed by considerable funding, which is impacting on young people of Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage; and the development of a movement usually described as Islamism, which promotes a militant version of Islam with political aims.
- There is a consensus among Muslim scholars that the Qu'ran (Koran) lays an obligation upon Muslim women to dress modestly. Taken on their own, the texts appear to assume, rather than to decree, covering the head. However, covering the head for women has been traditional in the Middle East and is part of many Muslim traditions.
- Among contemporary Muslims there is a wide range of views as to how the obligation of modesty should be observed. These range from the view that 'My modesty is in my heart, not my dress' to the complete obscuring of the female form and identity.
- The lack of any central authority or clergy in Islam comparable to the Pope, Emperor or General Council in Catholic or Orthodox Christianity, has meant that there has been a degree of variation within place and time.
- The variety of possibilities for female Muslims includes the 'headscarf' (hijab); the body-covering robe (jilbab); the overall robe and removable face piece (niqab); and the complete covering (burka/burkha). The shalwar kameez, a combination of trousers and tunic widely worn on the Indian sub-continent, is regarded by many Muslims as acceptably modest, but seen by some as not Islamic.
- Some Islamic sects claim that there is an obligation on Muslim men to wear a beard a fist long. This is not a view that is universal to Islam.

Sikhism

In general, covering the body is a requirement. All initiated Sikhs wear the five 'K' symbols as a sign of their initiation into the Sikh community. Male Sikhs wear a turban,



the removal of this is unacceptable. This should be in the academy colours (blue, grey or white)

- There have been relatively few issues arising from Sikh religious requirements since Mandla.
- Sikhism requires that baptised Sikhs should wear their hair uncut and covered (kes/h); and should carry a comb (khanga); a steel bracelet (kara) and short sword or dagger (kirpan). They should also wear short cotton drawers (kachha).
- Both the kara and kirpan are in their origin weapons of war and some Sikhs are quite explicit in their view that the purpose of the kirpan is for self-defence and the defence of Sikh women.
- However, there have been few issues in Britain with either of these requirements. (The RAF, for example, make it clear that a Sikh will be allowed to comply with these requirements except where it is technically impossible). It has normally been accepted that the law on bladed weapons in public places should be met either by a symbolic wearing of the kirpan or by making it effectively unusable by sewing into clothing. While it has not been determined in court, it is possible that a ban would be upheld where it was a reasonable response to the carrying of knives more generally by young people. Only a symbolic wearing is allowed in the academy, and should be agreed in advance by the Headteacher.
- Although the gurus emphasised the equality and active participation of women, there are traditional customs, such as women covering their bodies, which are related to other customs from the sub-continent and which may arise.

Rastafarian

Rastafarian women dress modestly. There is a taboo on wearing second hand clothing, and therefore children may be unwilling to wear borrowed clothing for PE.

- The requirements for Rastafarianism include modesty for women (though this is not dogmatically defined).
- There is a requirement not to cut hair, though the 'dreadlock' style of haircut is not obligatory. A foundation school of religious character which banned dreadlocks was supported by the courts before the introduction of the Human Rights Act. This may still be good law.

Religion and dress

- The issues that governors may have with the more extreme forms of restrictive dress for women are not trivial. Baroness Hale, in her speech in the SB case in the House of Lords, for instance, opened up issues against the freedom of women and their fundamental rights. Dress may be thought to symbolise a subordinate status for women, (as is promoted by some Islamic scholars who insist on more extreme Islamic dress).
- There may be concerns as to the degree to which women are free to choose; whether religious influences or pressure from the community, parents, relatives or



older children are so strong that they preclude a free choice and the academy should resist this.

- There may be a concern that dress which identifies with a religion may trap a child in a single identity and limit their options for personal growth.
- There may be concerns that some forms of 'Islamic dress', in particular, are divisive and operate to separate Muslim girls and so conflict with the academy's statutory duty to promote community cohesion.
- It may be felt that there are practical considerations of teaching and learning where the full face is not open and where language may be obscured.
- The wearing of extreme dress may be, like any other uniform breach, an act of teenage rebellion/assertion against the school/academy. It may also be an expression of adolescent idealism and self-sacrifice.
- However, though some schools and academies may be concerned about some forms of extreme dress, other schools and academies may feel there is no problem or may feel that the advantage of having students in the school/ academy, regardless of how they are dressed, does more for community cohesion than refusing to admit them. This is precisely the range of considerations that led Lord Bingham to state that decisions of this nature were rightly left to the governors and head to decide. It is a choice for the school or academy.