

St Benedict's Catholic College



Uniform Policy

Dressing for Excellence

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Uniform policy

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Our Uniform Principles

This policy aims to:

- Foster the community ethos of the College
- Encourage a sense of equality and cohesion where clothing is not used to highlight levels of family income, create social hierarchies or label students as members of identity groups (other than religious) since this is at odds with the culture of the College
- Enable the rapid identification of a St Benedict's student on site providing a safer and more secure environment
- Embed a culture of learning to dress appropriately for different settings
- Protect students from social pressures to dress or present in ways that reflect superficial fashions
- To prevent clothing/haircuts associated with undesirable behaviour coming onto the College site
- Ensure that students of different social, religious and ethnic groups feel welcome
- Ensure staff time is focused on student achievement, teaching and learning
- Ensure that our culture of high standards is projected to the wider community

Introduction

At St Benedict's Catholic College, we place an emphasis on pride in our community and on achieving excellence in every dimension of the life and work of our college. A visible indication of this is in the standard of our students' uniform.

The College believes that there are many benefits to the whole community of students wearing a smart uniform. College uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to our ethos and in setting an appropriate professional look within college and our wider community.

First impressions are very important in ensuring that students are good ambassadors for the college. At St Benedict's Catholic College, we aim to provide all students with a sense of identity. We aim to prepare them for the professional world of work and to ensure that they leave as excellent role models for others.

Dressing in a smart and professional way prepares students for success in the wider world of further education and work. We operate the 'St Bens sharp' principle; 'sharp tie', 'top button done up', 'blazers on', 'skirts unrolled', 'shirts tucked in'.

Expectations

Students are not permitted to deviate from the uniform policy except in rare and exceptional circumstances.

There may be medical reasons that make wearing parts of the uniform challenging. Where this is the case, any agreed changes will be as close to the formal uniform as possible and made only after a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Director of Achievement and Behaviour.

Shoes

Plain black flat leather (or faux leather) shoes of a formal and traditional style (no boots, trainers/sports shoes, canvas shoes or other footwear such as vans/converse/plimsolls or similar). Shoes must not display flashings or logos of any kind. Students with a medical note may be allowed to wear suitable alternatives (for a short period of time), but they will also need to be black and discreet. This should be agreed with the student's Pastoral Lead or Director of Achievement & Behaviour, in advance of the College day.

Shoe manufacturers can be deceptive/clever in the way they market trainers and other footwear towards teenagers and often release shoes that can look like school shoes. If you

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are unsure about any purchase, please don't hesitate to contact your child's pastoral lead in advance of purchase.

Skirt

Only the College skirt can be worn. It is a smart, pleated, grey skirt, worn just above knee length; it must not be rolled up or altered in anyway. The 3 stripes on the waistband must be visible at all times.

Trousers

Smart, tailored, plain black trousers only. Plain style belts with small, traditional, non-branded buckles are allowed.

Base Layers

A white short sleeved or long-sleeved base layer may be worn under the school shirt at any time and is encouraged during the colder months.

School Jumpers

The optional jumper is no longer permitted as part of the college uniform at any time of year. The introduction of a base layer makes this item unnecessary.

Socks

Socks must be black, in line with uniform expectations. Socks should be ankle or knee length.

Overcoats/Jackets

A plain style in a single dark colour free of markings. No fashion jackets. Hooded sweatshirts/tops should never be brought into college. Students must wear their college blazers or carry it with them during warmer weather (announcements will be made when this will come into effect).

Bags

All bags should be sensible and practical and have the capacity to hold textbooks, folders and equipment. Fashion bags or high-value designer bags / handbags are not permitted. Use of separate bags for PE kit encouraged.

Hairstyle

Hair should not be cut shorter than a grade 2 (clipper) overall. Any fade haircuts must not have sudden changes of grade. There must be no shaved lines or patterns. This also applies to eyebrows. Hair, even if dyed must be a natural colour (red/auburn, brown, black, blonde, fair). This also applies to braids. Only plain (black or navy), functional and safe hair accessories are allowed. Changes in hair fashions may require staff to apply their judgement to ensure appearances are acceptable and reasonable. The college respects and supports the HALO code (please see appendix 1)

Make-up and Jewellery

Noticeable make-up is not permitted. Coloured nail varnish, acrylic nails, gel nails, shellac nails and nail extensions of any kind are not permitted. False eye lashes are not permitted.

Jewellery is not permitted apart from one small plain spherical gold or silver ear stud (with no stones, faux gems or other embellishments or patterns) in the lobe of each ear. No other piercing studs or retainers are allowed. Students with non-permitted jewellery will be asked to remove it. Claiming that a recent piercing may close without a stud or retainer is not an acceptable excuse. Facial piercings are not permitted and will need to be removed.

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Rings and other jewellery are not permitted. Tattoos are not permitted. Badges (with the exception of those issued by the college) may not be worn.

Religious jewellery may be worn discreetly under clothing and should never be visible.

A watch and/or a medical bracelet may be worn. SMART watches are not permitted.

Any permitted jewellery described above must be removed prior to Physical Education lessons so as not to pose a risk to the wearer and those around them.

Religious Adaptations

Religious head wear may be worn in discreet colours but no other religious insignia is permitted on the outside of the uniform.

Support & Consequences

If a breach of this code cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of staff, it may result in a specified period of time in the Gillingham Learning Centre (inclusion) for the student, including break and/or lunchtimes.

Roles and responsibilities

The form tutor is responsible for ensuring the day-to-day implementation and reinforcement of our uniform policy.

Parents and carers will take responsibility for ensuring that their child owns and wears the correct uniform including a PE kit. They will be encouraged to work in partnership with the college to maintain high standards of appearance and will have the opportunity to raise any issues arising from the implementation of our policy.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that our policy is followed. Staff should challenge all breaches of uniform, recording it on Class Charts. They will be responsible for following up any issues, or they may refer to the Pastoral Leads in the case of persistent uniform issues where intervention and support may be needed. Smaller infringements such as an untucked shirt would result in a student having the issue recorded on Class Charts.

The Director of Achievement and Behaviour and pastoral team are responsible for monitoring uniform and ensuring all staff address non-compliance with uniform rules. They will also ensure that appropriate procedures are put in place to enable the protocol to be applied consistently and fairly.

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own uniform and will be made fully aware of the college's expectations. Students are expected to wear college uniform in line with our policy at all times from leaving home in the morning until returning home after college. They should be proud ambassadors of the college.

Value for Money

The college will re-tender the uniform supplier contract every 5 years to ensure best value and to comply with legislation.

Gender

It is an expectation that students change for PE in communal rooms designated by sex. In circumstances where this causes discomfort on the grounds that a student identifies as transgender, the college will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments. Reasonable adjustments in this situation is described as the use of a separate cubicle, accessible toilet (which are separate and large enough to change in) or another alternative room in the college (where possible and practicable).

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Pre-owned Uniform

The college works with Essex Free School Uniform Project that keeps a stock of donated pre-owned uniform items and you should contact us directly if you would like to enquire.

Additional Information

Students should be clean shaven in Key Stage 3 (Year 7-9). Facial hair may be worn in Key Stage 4 (Year 10-11) but must be neat in appearance.

When snow or extreme cold is forecast, plain black v neck jumpers / boots may be worn to and from college, but shoes are to be worn during the normal working day. The college will issue this guidance at the appropriate time.

Damaged uniform should be replaced as soon as it is practicably possible. Students are not permitted to wear trainers or non-formal footwear whilst school shoes are being replaced. Loan items will be provided by pastoral staff.

Non-college issue items must not be worn to embellish uniform e.g. hairclips, tie-pins, braces, hats/caps (list indicative not exhaustive).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour for Learning policy.

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***NB – Our uniform is currently in a period of transition with new uniform items only appropriate for certain year groups – please see Appendix B for further details**

Uniform guide with pictures

Blazer* (only available from our College supplier)



Girls' Blazer

All students must wear a black blazer with a college badge; to be worn at all times unless permission is given to remove it. No other badges to be worn attached to the blazer unless awarded or approved by the college.



Boys' Blazer

Trousers (can be purchased from any supplier)



Girls' Trousers; Smart, tailored**, plain, black trousers of waist height and ankle length. (see images below)

Boys' trousers; smart, tailored plain black trousers

Plain style belts with small buckles are allowed.



**** A tailored trouser should sit comfortably on the student, without being excessively tight or overly loose, and should present a smart and consistent appearance in line with our expectations.**

Girls' tailored black school trousers



Girls' black leggings/flared



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Skirt* (only available from our College supplier)

Smart, pleated grey skirt, worn just above the knee. Skirt rolling is not permitted. The 3 stripes on the waistband must be visible at all times.



Yrs 8-11



Yr 7*
from Sept. 2026

Tight skirts, tight trousers, jeans or leggings are not permitted.



Shirt (can be purchased from any supplier)

Plain white, long sleeved, shirt, with a collar suitable for a tie (with a top button); short sleeved shirts (again with collar) can be worn in the summer. No fitted shirts to be worn; no blouses.

Shirt must be tucked in with the top button always done up

Tie* (only available from our College supplier)

College tie is compulsory. The tie must be worn smartly, with the top button of the shirt done up.



Yrs 8-11



Yr 7*
from Sept. 2026



Base Layer* (can be purchased from any supplier)

A plain white base layer may be worn under the shirt at any time

Socks / Tights (can be purchased from any supplier)

Socks or tights must always be worn.

Girls Below knee length or ankle socks in plain black; tights in plain black/sheer (no patterned tights)

Boys Plain black socks

Students should bring spare socks on the days they have PE.



Overcoats (can be purchased from any supplier)

A plain style in a single dark colour free of markings. No fashion/high value jackets. Hooded sweatshirts/tops should not be brought into college. Students must wear their college blazer or carry it with them during warmer weather.

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Shoes

Plain black flat leather (or faux leather) shoes of a formal and traditional style (no boots, trainers/sports shoes, canvas shoes or other footwear such as Vans/Converse/Plimsolls or similar. Students with a medical note may be allowed to wear suitable alternatives (for a short period of time), but they will also need to be black and discreet. This must be agreed with our Director of Behaviour & Achievement in advance of the college day via email.



Shoes must not display flashings or logos, even if it matches the colour of the shoe

Trainers

Trainers for PE should be supportive and as plain as possible in any colour with non-marking soles as they will be worn in the Sports Hall.



PE Training Top* (only available from our College supplier)
Royal Blue training top with college crest

PE Shorts* (can be purchased from any supplier)
Plain black shorts



PE Socks* (Can be purchased from any supplier)
Royal Blue sports socks.



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Base Layer*

(can be purchased from any supplier)

A plain black base layer (long or short sleeve) can be worn under the PE top at any time



Black Tracksuit Trousers

(can be purchased from any supplier)



Black Leggings* (Girls)

(can be purchased from any supplier)

Sports leggings, ankle length. Flares are not permitted

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Supplier

How to purchase our College uniform

We offer a totally on-line service for the purchase of our uniform from our current suppliers, **SWI**.

The website address is www.swischoolwear.co.uk or follow the link on our website.

The 'Direct to Parent' supply solution provides you with the ability to order uniform and PE kits 24 hours a day.

Orders can be placed either online, by phone or post. Deliveries can be made to home or college.

Online: visit the website and order via 'Direct to Parent' online.

For anyone who does not have access to the internet, please contact the college and we will assist you with the on-line ordering process.

By post: The College has copies of the order forms available on request. Alternatively, a downloadable version is available. Send your completed order form with payment by cheque or credit card to SWI.

Telephone: 01928 752610

Delivery: Orders over £75 are delivered to home free of charge, within 3-5 days.

Orders under £75 sent to a home address (or other specified) incur a £4.50 delivery charge. During term time, SWI operates a free of charge weekly delivery service into college.

Basic items e.g. shirts, jumpers, and trousers can be purchased from a wide range of supermarkets/other retailers.

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Branded Items - SWI Sizing charts

SKIRTS	Waist	22"	24"	26"	28"	30"	32"	34"	36"	38"	40"
Length	18"	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			
	20"	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	22"					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

PE TRAINING TOP (sizing is unisex)	Chest	22/24"	26/28"	30/32"	32/34"	34/36"	38/40"	42/44"	46/48"	50/52"
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BLAZER (sizing is unisex)	Chest	27"	28"	29"	30"	31"	32"	33"	34"	35"
		36"	38"	40"	42"	44"	46"	48"	50"	52"

We recommend checking your child's measurements before buying, using our top tips to ensure the best fit. To get the most accurate measurements, where possible measure over the undergarments most likely to be worn, rather than over outer clothing.

Please Note: All of the sizes of our garments are given in inches.



1. **Height:** This is best done barefoot, with feet together flat on the ground and back against a wall; measure from the top of the head to the ground.
2. **Neck:** Place the tape measure where the shirt collar would normally sit around the base of the neck. Leaving a little extra room is very important so that the collar is comfortable, so make sure not to pull too tightly.
3. **Chest:** Take the tape measure through the underarms, around the fullest part of the chest.
4. **Waist:** Measure the natural waistline, not pulling too tightly to ensure comfort.
5. **Hips:** Standing straight with the heels together, take the tape measure around the fullest part of the bottom.
6. **Inside leg:** This time shoes on; measure from the inside leg to where the trouser is normally worn on the shoe. If you're unsure, trousers should sit approximately 5cm from the ground.

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Essex Free School Uniform Project

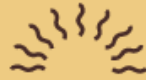
We partner with the Essex Free School Uniform Project to provide free second-hand uniform.

More details can be found here: www.facebook.com/essuniex/ or www.dnanetworks.org/

If you have uniform that your son/daughter has outgrown and which is in good condition please consider donating it to the project so other students can benefit. Donations can be made via the college office or directly to the Essex Free School Uniform project.

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Appendix 1 – The Halo code



The Halo Code

Our school champions the right of staff and students to embrace all Afro-hairstyles. We acknowledge that Afro-textured hair is an important part of our Black staff and students' racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, and requires specific styling for hair health and maintenance.

We welcome Afro-textured hair worn in all styles including, but not limited to, afros, locs, twists, braids, cornrows, fades, hair straightened through the application of heat or chemicals, weaves, wigs, headscarves, and wraps.

At this school, we recognise and celebrate our staff and students' identities. We are a community built on an ethos of equality and respect where hair texture and style have no bearing on anyone's ability to succeed.

Notes:

1. Schools have the right to enforce a dress code as long as it is fair and does not unduly discriminate against any students and staff. Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), "schools must eliminate racial discrimination and promote good race relations". Policies and practices that prohibit hairstyles which are primarily used to maintain Afro-textured hair can lead to indirect discrimination.
2. The Halo Code focuses on hair textures and styles most commonly associated with the Black community. The term Black has historically been used as a racial and political label. Here, we use it to refer to people of the African Diaspora, including those with mixed heritage, who as a result of their ancestry have Afro-textured hair.
3. The Halo Code is a gender neutral policy.
4. In order to embody the spirit of The Halo Code, staff are encouraged to familiarise themselves with different Afro-textured hairstyles and their cultural significance, and to avoid labelling Afro-textured hair with terms such as messy, unprofessional, or inappropriate.
5. Halo Code does not prevent schools from issuing additional guidance around Afro-texture hair and protective styles, including:
 - That head wraps and scarves should reflect other elements of the dress code such as the organisation's colours.
 - That hair be tied up for health and safety reasons..
 - .That hair colour is reflective of the wider dress code policy

Taken from <https://halocollective.co.uk/halo-code-school/> (November 2022)

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Appendix 2 – *Transition to new uniform items

Item	Transitional Arrangements
Blazer	The new blazer has an updated logo. When current stocks are used, blazers with the new logo will be supplied. Students can wear either blazer.
Tie	The new 3 stripe tie with the college crest will be available from September 2026 and will be introduced for year 7. Students in Year 7 must only wear the new tie Students in Years 8-11 in September 2026 may wear either tie. Anyone purchasing a new tie will receive the new design.
Skirt	All students will wear the new skirt from September 2026. Students in years 8-11 in September 2026 will be provided with 1 skirt free of charge, if ordered by July 2026.
Blue Short Sleeve PE top	Students in year 7 will only be able to order the blue top from September 2026. Students in Years 8-11 in September 2026 will continue to be able to purchase the current white top until supplies run out. In classes from year 9 onwards, students already wear a mixture of the white and blue tops, currently used for GCSE students.
Optional Black Jumpers	Students will no longer be permitted to wear a jumper from September 2026 (unless at the discretion of the Principal during particularly cold periods)
Base Layers (under Shirt and PE)	All students will be able to purchase from September 2026.
Black Shorts	Students in year 7 will wear black shorts from September 2026. Students in Years 8-11 in September 2026 will continue to be able to purchase the royal blue shorts until supplies run out, when they can replace either plain black or royal blue shorts.
Girls Leggings	All students to wear plain black, ankle length sports leggings from September 2026.
Sports Socks	Students in year 7 will wear royal blue socks from September 2026. Students in Years 8-11 in September 2026 will continue to be able to purchase the St Benedict's branded socks until supplies run out, when they can when they can replace plain royal blue socks.
Rugby Top ½ zip Fleece	Students in Years 8-11 in September 2026 will continue to be able to wear these items, but they will no longer be available for purchase