

The Right Blazer

Developing pre-loved uniform provision

Tips and advice for schools in England



The Children's Society

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

In autumn 2021, the Department for Education will be publishing [new statutory guidance](#) for schools which seeks to make school uniform more affordable for families. The guidance will include measures on second-hand uniforms, schools' arrangements with suppliers, and ensuring parents have access to clear information about uniform policies. Schools will not need to make any changes before it comes into effect (expected to be in autumn 2021).

To help implement the guidance, the Children's Society, Child Poverty Action Group and Children North East have joined forces to share some ideas and good practice from our research with schools. With some adjustments to policies and practices, schools can take the pressure of school uniform costs off children and their families.

Why organise pre-loved uniform provision?



Help families access compulsory school uniform at **reduced or no cost**.



Extend the life of items that children **quickly grow out of**



Promote a positive **eco-friendly culture** of contributing and reusing.



Raise funds for the school if families choose to make a donation.

Want to set up a pre-loved school uniform shop?



1. Shop design

Take steps to reduce the stigma some parents and carers may feel when they access pre-loved uniform:

- Make the 'shop' look tidy and professional
- Display clothes neatly on rails and hangers rather than in piles
- Make the experience easier and quicker by organising clothes into categories and sizes
- Have a discreet pot for donations so that families can decide if and how much they wish to contribute.
- Create a shopping experience by providing recycled paper bags for items to be taken



"It should be a community thing... we all give back the ones we don't need and the school could repair and wash them and give them back out... the children should all feel included and feel the same" (Reception and Year 4 parent)

"I've heard of them holding a uniform swap which helps parents not have to spend too much when buying uniforms for the new school year" (Year 3 parent).

2. Opening times

You may choose a mixture of days and times that coincide with both busier and quieter periods in school. For example:

- At school events such as parents' evenings, summer fayres, school performances
- An hour every Wednesday
- At the end of the spring, summer and autumn terms
- Once a month or once every half-term



Opening times may also be dependent on the number of donations received. Have a **dedicated email address** so families can place orders and organise access outside the usual opening times.

3. Donations

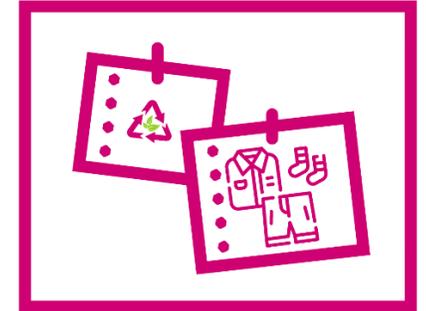
- Specify that only **good quality, clean uniform items** are being collected.
- Set up **collection points** at certain times and days around the school e.g. have labelled boxes in the reception, playground, classroom etc.
- Pre-loved Uniform Coordinators can be responsible for **sifting and sorting donations**.
- Decide how and where donations will be stored.



Promoting your pre-loved uniform provision

You can promote your pre-loved uniform provision through:

- Newsletters
- Parent noticeboards
- Half-termly text or email reminders
- Leaflets and posters created by students to get them all involved
- School website – front page and uniform section
- Social media – school and PTA Twitter and Facebook accounts
- Assemblies prior to opening
- Transition and new start information
- Creative ideas from Pre-loved Uniform Champions



“The school does its utmost to support families who struggle to buy uniform. Used uniform is always donated to the school. The uniform is cleaned, ironed and available for families who require support. There isn't any pressure to pay for the uniform.” (Member of staff)



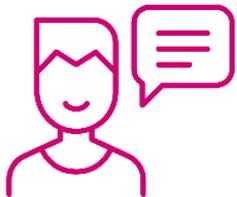
Running your pre-loved uniform provision

Commitment and planning are essential and a number of people can get involved to help with the organisation:

- Students
- Parents and carers, including PTA members
- School staff

Volunteers can become **Pre-loved Uniform Coordinators**, which is the perfect role for someone looking to work with families.

Students can take on the role of **Pre-loved Uniform Champions** to promote the provision and be involved in developing the whole school ethos of re-using.



"It's saving money, it's fine, it's not an issue. Not everyone has lots of money. As long as they are wearing a jumper"
(Year 6 pupil)

5 things to remember

Consider how to mitigate the stigma that is sometimes attached to not purchasing brand new clothing.

Think about...



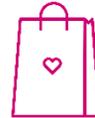
Language: **Pre-loved** vs. second-hand



Promotion: **Eco-friendly** vs. financial status



Access: **Universal** vs. free school meals or pupil premium eligibility



Environment: **Shop** vs. spare uniform box



Feeling: **Whole school ethos** vs. necessity