



North East School Uniform Charter

North East
Uniform
Charter

North East Mayor Kim McGuinness | Children North East

 **Kim McGuinness**
North East Mayor



Because growing
up can be hard

A group of children in school uniforms are running outdoors. In the foreground, a boy with blonde hair is running towards the camera, wearing a dark blue sweater and dark trousers. To his left, a girl with dark hair is also running, wearing a dark blue sweater, a white collared shirt, and a red backpack. Other children are visible in the background, also in uniform. The background consists of a brick wall and a metal fence.

The average primary school uniform in the UK costs £343 a year.

The average secondary school uniform in the UK costs £442 a year.

Let's change that.

The North East School Uniform Charter, created in partnership between Children North East and North East Mayor Kim McGuinness, sets out a shared regional commitment to ensuring that school uniforms are affordable, accessible, and equitable for every child. Its purpose is to reduce financial barriers that prevent children from fully participating in school life, and to support families across the North East to access uniform without hardship or stigma.

Children North East has been working since 1891 to support babies, children, young people, and families to grow up happy and healthy. Since 2011, our Poverty Proofing® programme has helped schools, healthcare providers, cultural organisations and others identify and remove the hidden barriers that disadvantage those children living in poverty. Having worked with over 600 schools, and consulted thousands of pupils, families, teachers, governors and stakeholders, we have a deep understanding of how financial pressures shape children's experiences and their ability to learn.

School uniform is one of the most significant factors influencing a child's day-to-day experience at school. From branded trainers to having enough clean shirts; clothing affects how children feel, how they are perceived by peers, and how confidently they can participate. With the average secondary school uniform costing over £400, and often more once PE kits and extras are included, the financial burden on families is substantial.

By establishing a region-wide commitment to accessible and affordable uniforms, we can ensure no child is singled out because of what they wear, no parent must choose between uniform and essentials, and every child can attend school with dignity and confidence.

The Charter

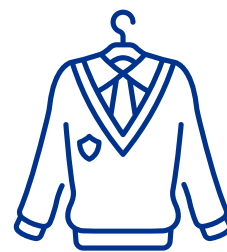
This charter outlines the commitment for every school and education setting to enable students equitable access to education. From Pre-Key Stage 1 through to college, this responsibility extends beyond school uniform to include sports equipment, dress codes, learning resources, and all other requirements that may affect participation and inclusion.

The Supporter of North East Uniform Charter level recognises settings that adhere to government guidelines and place students and families at the centre of all uniform-related decisions.

The Champion of North East Uniform Charter level is for settings that go further, actively ensuring affordability, accessibility, and fairness across every aspect of what students are required to wear.



Purpose and principles



Branded items



Affordability



Generic uniform



Consultation & Review



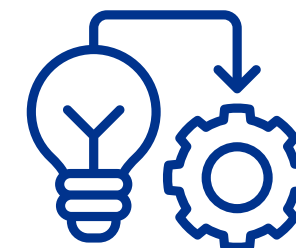
Supply and procurement



Second-hand uniform



Enforcement



Implementation



Equality and inclusion

Area		Supporter of North East Uniform Charter	Champion of North East Uniform Charter
	Purpose and principles	Prioritise affordability in all uniform decisions	Embed affordability, accessibility, and sustainability throughout uniform policies
	Affordability	Reduce costs for families	Proactively design for affordability, completing affordability assessments and publishing approximate costs in the policy
	Branded items	Minimise branded items, including PE kit (up to 3)	Go beyond expectations to keep branding as low as possible (0 - 2 branded items, including PE kit)
	Generic uniform	Use generic non-branded items that are widely available where possible	Specify simple, widely available, non-branded requirements to reduce cost and increase access
	Consultation & Review	Consult families on planned changes, Regularly review with families and pupil feedback, considering staff engagement	Embed ongoing, meaningful engagement and feedback to review affordability, access, uptake; gather ongoing feedback, considering staff engagement
	Supply and procurement	Prioritise cost, quality, durability; avoid single suppliers	Prioritise cost, quality, durability; avoid exclusive suppliers
	Second-hand uniform	Provide accessible second-hand options frequently	Ensure there is a strong re-use scheme in school and community
	Enforcement	A commitment to moving away from punishments relating to uniform	Remove sanctions related to not having correct uniform items, supportive conversations to replace punitive measures
	Implementation	Communicate changes clearly and early	Use a communication plan that ensures families and staff understand changes and the rationale in a timely manner
	Equality and inclusion	Ensure policies meet cultural, special educational and medical needs	Inclusive and flexible for cultural, special educational and medical needs

How you can get involved

1 Share your thoughts

We want to gather the opinions, insights and views from schools and families across the region to help us shape the Charter. Fill out this survey and share with your networks.



2 Find out more

If you want to be more involved, find out more about how you can be an early adopter or learn more about the benefits of joining our movement contact us today.

✉ enquiries@children-ne.org.uk



3 Sign me up

Visit our webpage to find out more about the Charter and how you can join the movement!



A photograph of two young children playing on a grassy field. The child on the left is a girl with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a bright green PE vest over a dark blue shirt and dark blue shorts. The child on the right is a boy with brown hair, wearing a white PE shirt and white shorts with black stripes. They are both in a crouched, playful position. The background is a blurred green field and a dark fence. Overlaid on the image is a large white text quote.

"I've had my PE kit for three years, but when it no longer fits, I might not be able to take part in PE because a new kit is expensive."

“The costs of school uniform are expensive, a blazer alone costs £50. The cost and pressure of having to buy uniform for four children is too much.”

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