

1st April 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the discussion regarding school skirt options and the potential shift to a trousers-only policy. The level of engagement has been exceptional, with comments and suggestions not only from parents but also from the wider community, even drawing attention from the national media. Thank you for your passion, enthusiasm and valuable feedback.

At The Whitstable School, we continue to uphold high standards and I believe our uniform plays a vital role in how we present ourselves. A smart and consistent uniform reflects our values, academic excellence and the enrichment our students receive. It is essential that we represent our school in the best possible light, showcasing the quality of our education and the pride we take in being part of this community.

Our high standards are rooted in our TRACK values; Tolerance, Resilience, Achievement, Courtesy, and Knowledge, which underpin everything we do. These values guide the way we behave, interact and learn. Wearing the correct uniform with pride is one of the many ways our students live out these values each day, reinforcing a shared culture of respect, aspiration and unity.

Two weeks ago, we launched a survey to gather your views on school skirts. I remain committed to ensuring any significant uniform change has the backing of the majority of our parents. While most responses supported a move to a trousers-only policy, the majority was not overwhelming. As a result, we will not move to a trousers-only uniform at this time.

However, based on feedback from both parents and students, I have considered a number of measured adjustments to help us maintain high standards while avoiding major changes to our current policy:

1. From September 2025, students who choose to wear a skirt will be required to wear black tights or black ankle socks. Socks that go above the ankle will not be permitted.
2. From September 2025, students in Years 7 and 8 will be required to wear the yellow-banded skirt as the only approved skirt. For students in Years 9 and above, I strongly encourage parents to purchase the yellow-banded skirt when replacing older skirts. This will bring greater consistency and allow staff to address uniform matters in a sensitive and supportive manner.



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3. From September 2025, students will no longer be allowed to wear their PE kit for the full day. Instead, they will change into their PE kit before their lesson and return to their normal uniform afterward.

Currently, students wear their PE kit to school on PE days. However, feedback through student voice has highlighted that this has led to confusion and inconsistency in uniform expectations. On one day, students may wear trainers and jogging bottoms, but are expected to follow different standards the next. This inconsistency has blurred the boundaries of our high expectations.

To support this change, we are undertaking extensive renovations of our PE changing facilities. These improvements will increase capacity, provide private changing spaces, and ensure that all students feel comfortable and confident when changing.

In addition to these changes, I want to make it absolutely clear that all uniform must be worn correctly. This includes shirts tucked in, blazers worn at all times unless permission is given to remove them and top buttons done up. We all know how quickly teenagers grow and therefore please check that their shirts and skirts are still at the right length. Shirts should be long enough to be tucked in and skirts should be no higher than 6cm above the knee. These are not optional standards. They reflect the pride we have in ourselves, in each other and in our school.

I make no apologies for upholding high standards at The Whitstable School, which stands proudly as the highest-performing non-selective school in the area. Our appearance should reflect that achievement and the TRACK values we live by every single day. The staff and I will be increasing our collective efforts to uphold the uniform standards as we recognise that standards are not quite where we want them to be.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our school.

Yours sincerely,



Alex Holmes
Headteacher



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