



Eastbrook School

Together We Learn

13th December 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Uniform expectations from January 2023 – Response to Consultation

I'm writing to thank all those parents who have responded to the uniform consultation. Out of 1009 possible responses, 76 responded. Thank you for taking the time to feedback your views.

It is evident that, from the responses, there is some confusion, which I need to clarify.

1. **This is not a *new* uniform policy.** It is the policy that has always been in place. We are simply proposing to apply it.
2. **This is not a singular decision of any one person.** Considerable consultation has already been done, with students, staff and governors. In particular, the students themselves have been spoken to via the school council and the majority agreed with decision and reasons to enforce our ***existing policy***. It is also the outcome of a Behaviour Working Group, made up of staff members who have been working on this since September. **The overwhelming majority agree with the decision** to enforce the existing policy for the reasons I explained in my first letter.
3. **We are NOT proposing to cut students' hair.** We are saying that it can be *no shorter* than a Grade 2. There is no limit to the length of hair.

This week, we propose to hold special assemblies to explain our collective decision to our students. I reiterate that the reasons are:

1. **To raise expectations/aspirations.** We need to improve our reputation in the community and wider afield. The way we look says a lot about what we stand for. A smart appearance is paramount for this to happen. The reputation of Eastbrook needs to improve if we are to be the school of choice and be the school where the best teachers want to work as we grow and where local parents choose to send their children. So how we look matters because we are always compared to other schools.
2. **To dress smartly is about a mindset.** When we put on our uniform, we are saying that we are coming to school, ready to learn. We take pride in ourselves and have high expectations of ourselves. Despite what some respondents stated, there is a huge amount of evidence that shows the connection between uniform and behaviour eg ([Tes focus on...Uniforms and behaviour | Tes Magazine](#)). Furthermore, it reduces peer pressure to look a certain way or wear the most expensive clothes. In other words, it reinforces community and reduces bullying because students don't stand out as different, which is often a cause for bullying.

Some students have talked about freedom to express themselves. There are many ways that this can be done outside of school eg evenings, weekends and holidays. School is a place of

Dagenham Road, Dagenham, Essex RM10 7UR

Tel: 020 3780 3609

email: office@eastbrookschool.org



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learning and preparation for life beyond school. Often, fashion serves as a distraction from learning. It's well known in the teaching community that on non-uniform days, poor/off task behaviour increases and concentration levels decline. Research confirms this.

- 3. Our policy (which has not changed) is the same as every school in Barking and Dagenham, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest.** The raising of expectations is to match those in other schools. If we are to take our place amongst them, we must raise the bar at Eastbrook. If we carry on doing the same as we have always done, we will remain in the same place. We don't want this for our students; we want the best. It starts with our own expectations. This means that we need to change and improve.

However, we are listening to our students and parents who have raised the issue about trainers being required from Easter and how this may impact families who are already struggling during the cost-of-living crisis. I have no wish to add to this or create hardship. I take the point that, at a time such this, it will add to the burden and anxiety. Additionally, some parents said that they only buy shoes once a year. Therefore, after listening the parent/student views, the school agrees to postpone the reintroduction of shoes (which is already in the policy) to next September, by which time most students will need new footwear either through wear and tear or growth. There are also no changes to the rules about coats, so there should be no need to purchase a new one. I hope that goes some way to easing anxieties and shows that we are listening. Again, I ask that you work with the school on our road to improvement and support these collective decisions. I'm sure that you will join me in wanting only the best for our Eastbrook School community.

Kind regards

Avani Higgins,
Headteacher