

# Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock



## Uniform Policy

### Policy Details

| Legal Status | Adopted                     | Version Date  | Last Review   | Next Review   | Responsible |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Statutory    | 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 | February 2026 | February 2023 | February 2029 | Ms McCarthy |

### Related Documents

1. School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Act (Northern Ireland) 2026 (19/02/26)
2. DE: School Uniforms Guidelines (20/02/26)
3. Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
4. Positive Behaviour Policy
5. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
6. Pastoral Care Policy
7. Special Educational Needs Policy
8. Anti-Bullying Policy
9. Educational Visits Policy
10. Honours Tie Policy
11. College Rules for Students

## Contents

|            |  |          |
|------------|--|----------|
| 1.         | Introduction   | Page 3   |
| 2.         | Aims   | Page 3   |
| 3.         | Uniform Suppliers  | Page 3   |
| 4.         | Uniform Grants   | Page 3   |
| 5.         | PTA Uniform Upcycling Initiative (Uniform Bank)                                    | Page 4   |
| 6.         | College Crest  | Page 4   |
| 7.         | College Uniform  | Page 4   |
| 8.         | Rules for Uniform and Appearance   | Page 5   |
| 9.         | Representative Sport   | Page 5   |
| 10.        | Inclement Weather  | Page 5   |
| 11.        | Safe Travel: High Visibility Items and/or Reflective Panels                        | Page 5-6 |
| 12.        | Roles and Responsibilities   | Page 6   |
| 13.        | Compliance with Human Rights and Equality Legislation                              | Page 6   |
| 14.        | Exceptions on the Grounds of Religious Beliefs                                     | Page 6   |
| 15.        | Non-Compliance with College Uniform Policy   | Page 6-7 |
| 16.        | Transition Period When Changing Uniform Requirements                               | Page 7   |
| 17.        | Review   | Page 7   |
| 18.        | How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint about the Administration of this Policy | Page 7   |
| Appendix 1 | School Uniforms Guidelines - Guideline 12  | Page 8   |
| Appendix 2 | Related Documents  | Page 9   |

## 1. Introduction

Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock is committed to providing a positive, well-ordered and safe environment in which effective learning and teaching can take place. The College uniform helps identify our students as part of our College community. The results of extensive consultations with parents and students reveal that our uniform provides a strong sense of identify and belonging. It also serves to reduce social and financial pressure on our students. As representatives of Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock, students are expected to maintain high standards of uniform throughout the academic year.

The School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Act (Northern Ireland) 2026 (19/02/26) requires the Department of Education (DE) to issue official guidelines for school uniform policies. This policy reflects School Uniforms Guidelines (DE - 20/02/26), including Guideline 12 (See Appendix 1 - Page 8), and other guidance listed in Appendix 2 (Page 9). It is ratified by the Board of Governors and implemented by the students and staff of the College.

## 2. Aims

This Uniform Policy aims to:

- Help identify our students as part of our College community and encourage a sense of belonging and support;
- Instil pride in our students as representatives and ambassadors of the College;
- Promote a collective sense of responsibility among all students and staff for upholding high standards of behaviour and presentation;
- Create a positive, well-ordered and safe environment in which effective learning and teaching can take place;
- Develop students' self-discipline and sense of responsibility;
- Provide value for money for parents and protect students from social pressures to dress in a particular way;
- Be fair, inclusive and sensitive to the financial circumstance of families.

## 3. Uniform Suppliers

There are a range of suppliers who sell the College uniform:

- Gowdys, 121-131 Woodstock Road, Belfast, BT6 8AB. Tel. 028 9045 9052
- Roberts School Wear, 24 Central Avenue, Bangor, BT20 3AF. Tel. 028 9127 0516
- Truly Fare, 397 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 3GR. Tel. 028 9069 1347
- Warnocks, 791-793 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 7GX. Tel. 028 9038 1828
- PE uniform: [https://www.oneills.com/uk\\_en/clubs/education](https://www.oneills.com/uk_en/clubs/education) or by visiting O'Neill's shop at Unit 1C, CastleCourt, Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1. Tel. 028 9031 2903
- PE uniform: non-branded PE items can be purchased in the high street or online.

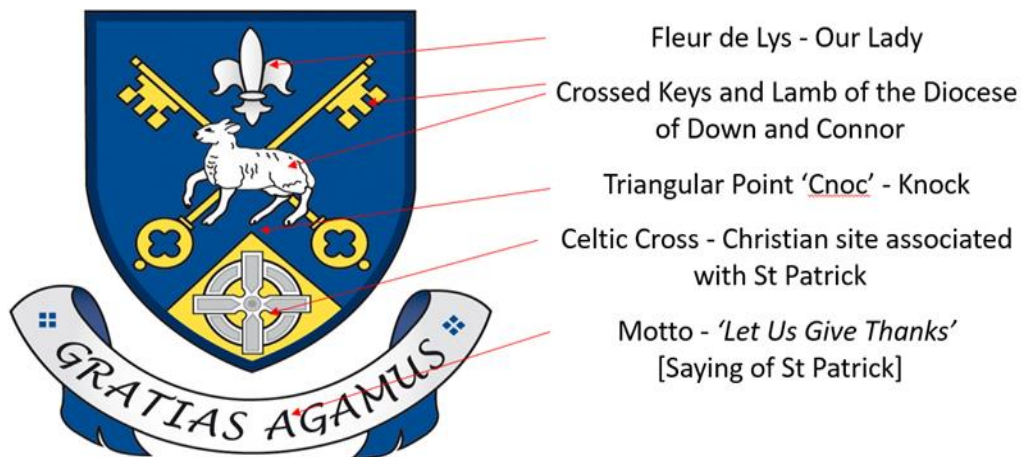
## 4. Uniform Grants

Families who receive benefits or are on low income could be entitled to uniform grants. The eligibility criteria are similar to those used for entitlement to free school meals. Information for parents on school uniforms and how to apply for a grant can be found at [Free School Meals / Uniform Grants | Education Authority Northern Ireland \(eani.org.uk\)](#). Further assistance is also available from the College on request. Please contact Ms McCarthy, Vice Principal (Pastoral Care).

## 5. PTA Uniform Upcycling Initiative (Uniform Bank)

Affordability and sustainability are at the heart of the College Uniform Policy. To assist families, the PTA runs a Uniform Upcycling initiative throughout the year. Parents are informed of the dates of a 'pop-up shop' and items are also available from Reception at any time. Parents are encouraged to be part of the PTA Uniform Upcycling initiative and to donate to, and purchase from, this very worthwhile initiative.

## 6. College Crest



## 7. College Uniform

### College Regulation Uniform - Compulsory Items

- Black blazer with the sew on College crest
- Traditional black school trousers (full length and regular fit) to be worn with plain black socks or Regulation drop waist skirt, mid-grey, stitch down, all round pleat (65/35) with adjustable waist (1880 brand), worn on/below the knee with grey knee-length socks or plain black opaque tights
- Plain white long or short-sleeved school shirt (top button fastened and tucked into trousers/skirt)
- College tie
- Plain black low-heeled school shoes (not trainers). Heels on shoes should be a maximum of 3 cm. Only black laces are permitted.

### College Regulation Uniform - Optional Items

- Grey or black V-neck knitted jumper with College colours
- College scarf or plain black scarf (non-branded)
- Plain black or grey woollen hat (non-branded) and/or a plain black or grey coat (non-branded) which may be worn whilst travelling to and from the College and then removed on entering the school building

### College Regulation PE Uniform - Compulsory Items

- College PE top (O'Neill's brand) or plain black t-shirt (non-branded)
- College shorts or skort (O'Neill's brand) or plain black shorts (non-branded)
- College socks (O'Neill's brand) or plain black or white ankle socks (non-branded)
- Trainers (laced, non-marking soles)

### College Regulation PE Uniform - Optional Items

- College half-zip (O'Neill's brand)
- College bottoms or leggings (O'Neill's brand) or plain black bottoms or leggings (non-branded)

## 8. Rules for Uniform and Appearance

- Students must wear regulation uniform in the College, going to and from the College and at all College functions and representative events, unless otherwise permitted by the Principal. Students must adhere to the College regulations regarding their personal appearance as stated in the Rules for Uniform and Appearance.
- All items of uniform should be labelled with the student's name. Students who lose items of uniform should check Lost Property in the Dining Hall.
- All students must wear a blazer coming to and going from the College.
- Black denim-type jeans are not acceptable.
- If students wish to wear a belt, it must be plain black.
- Subtle make-up is permitted in Year 10-14.
- For health and safety reasons, long hair must be safely tied back for work in a Science laboratory or Technology workshop.
- Students may wear one plain ring and/or a plain pair of studs/sleepers (one in each ear lobe). Nose piercings and other piercings must be replaced with a clear stud during the school day. No other jewellery may be worn. Jewellery must be removed during PE classes. Students who wish to have new piercings should therefore do so at the beginning of the summer holidays.
- All Upper School students must wear the Sixth Form crest on their blazers.
- Any item of clothing or jewellery worn against College uniform regulations is liable to be confiscated, to be returned at the end of the school day.
- An explanatory note from a parent must be provided if a student cannot wear College Regulation Uniform.
- The College reserves the right to issue further guidance to students during the school year in the event of fashion trends impacting adversely on student appearance.

***These rules are subject to amendment by the Principal. In all cases, the Principal reserves the right to apply what she considers to be the most appropriate sanctions in relation to non-compliance with College Uniform Policy.***

## 9. Representative Sport

- The College endeavours to provide school-owned kits for all representative teams.
- If students do not have a College half-zip (O'Neill's brand), they should speak with the respective Head of PE who will lend them the item, if necessary, for representative sport.
- If students are involved in a representative sporting activity at the beginning of the school day, they may come to school in their College half-zip (O'Neill's brand) and then change into College Regulation Uniform before returning to class.
- Students returning home after extra-curricular sporting activities are permitted to wear either College Regulation Uniform or College Regulation PE Uniform.
- Mouth guards are compulsory for camogie, Gaelic and hurling matches.

## 10. Inclement Weather

- In inclement weather a plain black or grey woollen hat (non-branded) and/or a plain black or grey coat (non-branded) may be worn whilst travelling to and from the College and then removed on entering the school building.
- If necessary, students are encouraged to wear additional layers under their school shirt.
- Students may wear a plain white long or short-sleeved school shirt.

## 11. Safe Travel: High Visibility Items and/or Reflective Panels

School uniforms can often be quite dark, making it difficult for students to be seen by drivers during the winter months, particularly on rural roads when travelling to and from school.

Parents are asked to ensure that students wear high visibility items and/or reflective panels on their schoolbags when making their way to and from the College.

## **12. Roles and Responsibilities**

**Students** are expected to take pride in their appearance as representatives of Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock. When in uniform, all students are ambassadors of the College and it is important that they adhere to school uniform standards in the College, going to and from the College and at all College functions and representative events.

**The Student Council, Mentors, Senior Prefects and Head Team** are role models for the student body. They are responsible for upholding high standards of uniform and representing the views of the students of Knock.

**College Staff** are responsible for upholding high standards of uniform. They should record poor uniform standards as per College procedures and refer any student whose uniform is persistently unsatisfactory to the Tutor.

**Tutors/Heads of Year/Heads of School/Vice Principals** have particular responsibility for maintaining high standards of uniform in their respective groups. They should follow the procedures outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy to ensure high standards of uniform are achieved.

**Parents/Carers** are expected to ensure that their child wears full College uniform and abides by College rules. Close cooperation between home and school is essential in order to maintain high standards of uniform. Parents are reminded that on accepting a place for their child(ren) in the College, they were advised that it is our expectation that parents support College staff when they implement College policies.

## **13. Compliance with Human Rights and Equality Legislation**

Uniform policies must comply with relevant human rights and equality legislation. We, as a College, are aware of the laws which protect individuals from unlawful discrimination, including human rights, race, sex and disability. For students with SEN or disabilities, particularly where these manifest as sensory issues, we will make reasonable adjustments that will not generate additional costs over the uniform requirements for other students. Temporary exemptions can also be made for a student who has sustained a broken limb.

Any request for an adjustment to the compulsory aspects of the uniform should be made in writing to the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) for consideration.

## **14. Exceptions on the Grounds of Religious Beliefs**

Adjustments to these regulations on the grounds of religious beliefs may be permitted. Any request for an adjustment should be made in writing to the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) for consideration.

## **15. Non-Compliance with College Uniform Policy**

Where a student is not adhering to College Uniform Policy, the Pastoral Team will make discreet and sensitive enquiries as to why this is the case and provide assistance if required (i.e. due to affordability issues).

If there is no valid reason, designated staff will apply appropriate sanctions as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy. As a community of learners, we rely on working in close partnership with home to ensure high standards of uniform are maintained for all our learners. In the unlikely event that a student is not wearing the uniform correctly and the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved, parents will be required to attend a meeting with the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) to discuss the matter further.

**16. Transition Period When Changing Uniform Requirements**

The College is committed to permitting reasonable transition periods when changing uniform requirements. Consideration will be given to the Key Stage of a student. For example, as stated in DE School Uniforms Guidelines, it is reasonable that Year 8 students should be able to purchase new uniform items, while it is unreasonable that Year 14 students should be required to purchase same.

**17. Review**

The Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) will review this Uniform Policy every three years in consultation with students and parents.

**18. How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint about the Administration of this Policy**

If you have a concern or complaint about the administration of this policy, please contact Ms McCarthy, Vice Principal, in the first instance. If necessary, you may then access and follow the College's Complaints Procedure which is available on the College website at [www.knock.co.uk](http://www.knock.co.uk). Should you remain dissatisfied with the College's response after completing the internal complaints procedure, you can bring your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman within six months. Contact details for the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman are provided on Page 8 of the Complaints Procedure.

Signed: **Mr Leo O'Reilly**  
(Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Date: **10<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

Signed: **Miss Deborah McLaughlin**  
(Principal)

Date: **10<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

## **School Uniforms Guidelines - Guideline 12**

The manager of a school must publish and keep-up-to date the following information on their website:

1. The school's Uniform Policy
2. At least once a year, any information about an agreement described under Guideline 11, unless it is a pre-commencement agreement
3. The value for money declaration if any is entered into on a single and/ or limited uniform supplier basis under Guideline 11
4. Information about, including the outcome of, the College's consultation with parents, students and anyone else consulted
5. The rationale for the requirements in terms of the uniform items and overall design which are set out in the uniform policy
6. The cost of each uniform item, or a range of costs per item, if applicable
7. The cost of each uniform, or a range of costs, if applicable
8. The uniform suppliers each uniform item is available to purchase from
9. When the school's uniform was last reviewed
10. Information about any uniform bank accessible to parents

## Related Documents

DE: Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001)

DE Circular 2017/04 (Updated Sept. 2024) - Safeguarding/Child Protection - A Guide for Schools - Update

DE Letter: School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill and Links to School Prospectuses for 2026/27 School Year (14/10/25)

School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Act (Northern Ireland) 2026 (19/02/26)

DE: School Uniforms Guidelines (20/02/26)

The Board of Governors and teachers recognise their obligations under the:

- The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (as amended)
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (as amended)
- Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (as amended)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)
- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (as amended)
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO)
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).