

ABBOT'S LEA SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mrs Ania Hildrey, M.Ed, B.Ed(Hons), NPQH



21 May 2021

Dear Families

Ref: Parliamentary Bill – review of our school uniform

As many of you will be aware, some three weeks ago, a new Parliamentary Bill has received the royal ascent, enshrining in law all school's duty to follow new guidance on the cost of school uniforms. Schools have always tried, but now are duty-bound to ensure best value for money when selecting school uniform.

To ensure our families get the best value for money when purchasing school uniform, Abbot's Lea School undertook a cost comparison exercise and I write to share it with you and to formally advise you on its outcome and the uniform that will apply in 2021-22 school year.

Cost comparison process

We compared prices of our current provider of school uniform with two other popular local suppliers and one additional reputable national supplier.

Plain and un-badged items were not included in this comparison, as the families can already purchase these items from many retailers and we neither specifically commission our supplier to provide those, nor direct families to purchase them from a named source, thereby promoting purchasing freedom for families.

Consideration and decision

Having considered the findings earlier this week, and having confirmed that no further discounts can be negotiated at this stage with any of the supplier, it was clear that our current supplier, Whittakers Schoolwear provides the best value for money in comparison to the two popular local suppliers and the one national supplier.

We have therefore taken a decision to remain with Whittakers Schoolwear.

About Whittakers Schoolwear and our experience

Since 2017, when Whittakers Schoolwear became suppliers of Abbot's Lea School uniform, they have built a positive, mutually beneficial relationship with us as the school and have not made any price increases in this time.

As a business, Whittakers Schoolwear pride themselves on their relationship with our school, on their flexibility and on their wraparound service which includes:

- They have a large physical shop for customers to view and try on uniforms
- They have our uniform station in a quiet corner in the shop with its own till point to support our students' shopping needs
- They offer quiet time shopping for those students who feel uncomfortable with people when they will open early or stay open late upon request
- They have an easy to navigate online shop with all sizes and prices listed
- They offer a "deliver and collect service" to the school for families who find this easier to order via school
- They have a sizing set of all uniform items held at our school for the families to use before ordering and our staff are happy to support students trying for size and advising families of the best fit to order
- They hold "try on events" at school for families to pre-order uniform to be delivered for Back To School (when permitted due to government guidelines and the school risk assessment)
- They offer an alteration service for those students who may need different sized items
- They have been accommodating in providing specific pre-authorised items agreed with me as the Headteacher when a student needed additional sensory support with the fabrics.

For full transparency, I am sharing with you the comparison exercise document, which you can see attached to this letter. I have also inserted the link below, for convenience, if you would like to read further information about the new Parliamentary Bill:

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2615>

I would like to reassure you that we have monitored and will continue to do so in the future, on an annual basis, the cost comparisons for the school uniform.

I also want to wholeheartedly thank you for engaging with our Nearly New School Uniform Shop which benefits equally from your donations of uniform items and your purchasing of any that might be of use. This, by far, is not only the most cost-effective, but also most environmentally friendly strategy for us all to promote, as far too many items of clothing – including uniforms – often get disposed of, when they could continue serving their purpose in their new home! For more information, please see our Heads' Weekly Newsletter on our website and social media for a standing advert for this wonderful shop.

Yours faithfully



Mrs A Hildrey
Headteacher