

How to Design a School Uniform

A uniform tells a lot about a school, so make sure your uniform is stylish and distinct.



Functional requirements of a uniform

- Durability (two years wear or more)
- Washability with little or no ironing or dry cleaning required
- Suit all figure types
- Not inhibit students from becoming involved in normal activities
- Adjustable
- Patterned fabric needs to be a small two-way pattern for economical use of fabric
- Sun safe

Other considerations

- Is within the price range of all students in the school. **Be careful** about introducing too many styles and fabrics – It can result in significantly higher cost and you will not be very popular with other parents with students at the school!
- Available for sale from an accessible outlet.
- Retail prices set at a level that is profitable and fair to parents.

Does your school or P&C Committee have the budget to afford the new uniform?

- Do you have a cashflow forecast?
- Where will uniforms be stored?
- And how long can you afford to store them? (Many fabrics have a shelf life of approx. 2 years and we recommend not more than 2 years of stock held).

IMPORTANT: If your school aims to generate income from sale of uniforms, then it is strongly recommended that you brand all uniforms with the school logo otherwise parents will be more likely to source substitutes elsewhere.

Be careful about the varying objectives of your uniform committee members. Many will consider the uniform from the perspective of a parent. What might be ideal for their siblings may not be suitable for most students. Also be careful of committee members who suggest setting retail prices just above costs. **THIS IS NOT VIABLE FROM A FUNDRAISING PERSPECTIVE.** Consider the uniform shop as a business, and determine styles and prices accordingly.

Logos make it yours. Ensure that the school logo is a registered trademark that can only be reproduced by authorized parties.

More is less. Putting together a uniform program can be fun. One of the most enjoyable parts of our work assisting schools is to create a look that reflects their identity. **Uniform programs become diluted when schools have too many options, colors, and styles.** We advise schools to start modestly and add items gradually. Schools will tell you that it is always easier to add items than it is to try to eliminate them.

Avoid fashion trends. School uniforms are not high fashion. They never have been nor should they be. That is not to say that school uniforms have to be boring, they don't. At P&C Uniforms, we have over 100 different styles in all fabrics and colors, and patterns. The challenge of school uniforms is delivering a consistent product year after year.

Designing the uniform. Prepare and give your uniform design brief to a professional uniform design / manufacturer for the purpose of obtaining a uniform design concept – P&C Uniforms is such a company, and will create a mock up of how the uniform would look. This saves lots of time and money with sampling.

You are not obliged to purchase from the design company, but it is ethical to advise your intentions. Some design companies may request that you pay for samples, so make sure that you ask first.

In your brief, offer a description of styles, fabrics, colours, logos to be incorporated in your school uniform. Your uniform designer should be able to provide you with a catalogue of styles and fabrics for both the summer and winter school uniforms, sports uniforms, and accessories.

After you have selected preferred styles and fabrics, being careful to maintain consistency of colour and theme, discuss the functional and aesthetic requirements of the design that you have used.