



# The Friary School

*High achievement through challenge and support for every learner*

Eastern Avenue, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7EW

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Headteacher

M J Allman

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7 May 2019

Dear Parent / Guardian,

## RE: CHANGES TO SCHOOL UNIFORM FOR SEPTEMBER 2019

There does seem to be something of a pattern of uniform changes amongst local secondary schools at the moment and you will be aware that we are making alterations to your daughter's school uniform too.

There is a mix of evidence related to the importance of school uniform but as a school it is something we value. It sets a formal tone to school life, it establishes a school identity, it is an equalizer in a community of very mixed incomes, it reduces peer pressure, it negates the costs of multiple school outfits, and it usually reduces distraction. Our Sixth Form results have improved drastically since we brought in a formal dress code, and though this is not the sole reason, it has certainly played a part.

We have communicated with students and parents several times over the last year regarding issues relating to uniform; whether it be House colours and awards with students, or appealing to parents of female students not to purchase micro-skirts for school, so the changes should not come as any real surprise. Equally, recent conversations with parents and students have revealed broad support, or at least a realistic understanding and an acceptance of these changes.

The changes will see the introduction of a standard school skirt, alongside a new school tie, as students rightly spotted a colour clash. The girls have been consulted over the options, we have received feedback online and via discussions with parents, and we have elected to go with the preferred choice. Equally, we have considered neighbouring schools' uniforms, dovetailed in with the boys' outfits, and discussed options with 'Uniforms Plus' as our local supplier.

The following details will make clear what changes are taking place and re-affirm many of the current uniform expectations that you should already be familiar with:

### School Skirt:

The new school skirt will be the red, tartan design shown online and voted most popular by the girls in school. The skirt is high-quality, semi-pleated, has an adjustable waist, and should last the vast majority of students up to two years. The prices range from 12 years and under at £24.99, and the 22"-28" waist at £29.99. This cost will reduce next year by around 20% as supply costs will fall substantially and the skirt's price will be in line with those of other local schools.

As a gesture of goodwill in this first year, the school will provide a redeemable £6 voucher against a new skirt for current Year 7-9 students and a £10 voucher for current Year 10 students who will get reduced wear out of the new skirt. This will bring the larger school skirt price down to at least £23.99.

This new skirt will be compulsory from September 2019 and will be readily available from Uniform Plus from late July onwards.

### School Tie:

The new school tie will be priced the same as the current one at £6.00. However, if current Year 10 students want to retain their current tie through to the end of Year 11 then they can do. Again, this is due to the reduced wear they will get out of a new one.



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## False / Extended Nails:

These have become an increasing problem over the last year where girls have been unable to play musical instruments, type onto keyboards, meet food preparation and workshop requirements, and have caused injuries in PE lessons. There are multiple occupations and workplaces where they are not appropriate and school is clearly one of them.

Consequently, we will not allow Year 7-11 students to wear these nails in school from September. It would be worth bearing this in mind over the summer holidays as if they are bought at the start of the summer break, then they will need to come off before the end.

## School Trousers:

Of course, girls who do not wish to wear the new school skirt do not have to - they can wear plain, black trousers instead.

Even so, before you purchase a pair for September, bear in mind that they need to be tailored, suit-style trousers. They should not be jeans-style, fitted, skinny, lycra, leggings-style or 'fashionably' short. They should sit on the top of the footwear.

## Other Items:

Despite these changes, many items will remain exactly the same; (i) the blazer; (ii) the plain black footwear (no trim, logo, colour, canvas, or heels); (iii) the white school shirt; (iv) the black socks / tights; (v) the plain, black v-necked jumper (no logos, patterns or zips). This will still ensure that a large portion of the uniform can be purchased from general suppliers.

Our main supplier will be Uniform Plus, 33 Tamworth Street, Lichfield, WS13 6JP, and they have categorically stated that they will hold plenty of stock to meet demand. We have received every assurance and will take them at our word. If there were to be significant issues, then we would have to think again for the following year.

Finally, we appreciate that there are always multiple complications with something new and school is a topic that everyone has an opinion on. We have introduced multiple changes over the last two years and most have gone very well. We recognise we do not get everything right all of the time, but we would argue that we do make the right call a large majority of the time.

We believe these uniform changes will improve standards, will allow staff to focus more time on teaching and learning, and make our school better. Our priority is purely your child doing as well as they possibly can and we rely on your backing to let us give this a good go. We really need you with us, supporting our message, so please help ensure September sees a smooth start.

We can promise you regular reminders, we will flag up any particular issues with your daughter over this term so that you are crystal clear what we need from you, and we will be as clear on messaging as we possibly can.

We are looking forward to September, we think this will be looked back on as a very positive step, and we are thrilled to know your child will be part of this.

Yours faithfully,

Matt Allman  
Headteacher

