

Catholic Schools - Uniform Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) Catholic School uniform expectations express the school's Catholic identity by affirming the dignity of each student, promoting equity and belonging, and supporting a shared commitment to respectful participation in school life.

(2) The Catholic Schools School Uniform Procedure (this procedure) is part of a suite of procedures that support the implementation of the Schools Pastoral Care, Wellbeing and Safe Behaviour Policy.

(3) This procedure provides requirements that schools must comply with in developing a School Specific Statement of Practice for Uniform Expectations.

Section 2 - Scope

(4) This procedure applies to Catholic Schools in the Catholic Diocese Maitland-Newcastle (the Diocese).

(5) This procedure must be followed, and to the extent of any inconsistency with a School Specific Statement of Practice - Uniform Expectations, this procedure will prevail.

Section 3 - Responsibilities

(6) Please refer to the Pastoral Care, Wellbeing and Safe Behaviours Policy. Specific responsibilities not included in the policy are below.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
School Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising school uniform as an expression of the school's Catholic identity, shaped by Catholic faith, values, and/or charisms, and as a formative practice that fosters inclusivity, belonging, and respect across the school community. • Communicating, liaising and collaborating with parents, parish priest and school community to develop a shared understanding of uniform expectations and processes within the school.
School Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating, supporting and guiding students to meet the clear uniform expectations within the school, including implementing responses for non-compliance as per the school processes.
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to acquiring and maintaining the school uniform items to support and enable their child to meet the uniform expectations. • Support and respond to processes including their child's compliance with school uniform expectations as a condition of enrolment.
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abide by the School Specific Statement of Practice - Uniform Expectation, wearing the uniform with a sense of pride, belonging and commitment to safety requirements.

Section 4 - Procedure

Establishing Uniform Expectations

(7) Schools are to establish a School Specific Statement of Practice – Uniform Expectations that support both system uniform standards as set out in this procedure and local specific expectations. (i.e. the exact uniform to be worn).

(8) The School Specific Statement of Practice is to be developed in consultation with the school community, including students, workers, parents and carers, and parish leaders.

(9) Schools must have written agreements in place to set out the terms and conditions of an on-site uniform shop, if appropriate, and/or supplier arrangements with commercial providers.

(10) Schools must comply with Diocesan procurement requirements including the [Procurement and Probity Policy](#) to have an on-site uniform shop operated by any party.

(11) In considering supply arrangements, the principal should consider the following:

- a. Compliance with the [Procurement and Probity Policy](#) and [Modern Slavery Policy](#) (ethical manufacturing standards);
- b. Ecologically sustainable practices for used items;
- c. Costs and quality considerations of items, including quality control of the supplier;
- d. Reliability, continuity and lead time of supply; and
- e. Availability for parents to acquire uniforms, including returns policy.

(12) The School Specific Statement of Practice - Uniform Expectations must:

- a. comply with general health and safety considerations;
- b. comply with work health and safety legislation (footwear for purpose and skin protection);
- c. comply with anti-discrimination legislation considering the diverse nature of a school's student population;
- d. provide uniform options, including shorts or pants, in all uniform categories, for all students;
- e. support access to the full range of school activities, including physical activities, while wearing a school uniform;
- f. consider affordability, functionality and durability of uniform items; and
- g. provide advice for parents on how to access financial support to meet the expectations in cases of genuine hardship.

Promoting a Positive School Identity and Pride in wearing a School Uniform.

(13) Catholic Schools expect students to wear the uniform during school hours, while travelling to and from school, and when engaged in school activities out of school hours, unless otherwise advised.

(14) In promoting the school's identity, schools are to communicate uniform expectations within the student and/or school handbook, via the website and in the school newsletter (at least once a semester).

(15) Where relevant, schools are to provide ample notice for the transition to a seasonal uniform change (Winter and Summer uniform transitions).

(16) If there are two uniform options expected across the week (academic uniform and sports uniform), the school is to communicate a schedule of the uniform to be worn each day that can be shared as a guideline for parents.

School-Specific Response to students not complying with School Specific Uniform

Expectations

(17) The School Specific Statement of Practice – Uniform Expectations should outline an appropriate, fair and consistent response to a student not wearing the uniform appropriately. This includes:

- a. Verbal opportunity to remind and informally request that students adhere to the uniform expectations within the school.
- b. Verbal and/or written notification to parents or carers from a designated worker to resolve the issue.
- c. Advice for parents on how to access financial support in cases of genuine hardship, if that is the context.
- d. Formal communication and approval of uniform exemptions under the principal’s discretion after discussions with parents or carers.

(18) Any consequences of continual noncompliance without an approved exemption or response from the parent are to be supported under the school’s Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) Statement of Practice.

System Uniform Requirements across all Catholic Schools

(19) This procedure contains system-wide requirements that schools must adhere to when developing school specific uniform expectations.

(20) Uniform expectations are to be implemented in ways that are pastoral, respectful, and responsive to individual student circumstances, including cultural, religious, and medical considerations.

General uniform standards for all schools:

- a. A hat must be available as part of all school uniform expectations and required to be worn in outdoor learning sessions. All primary schools are committed to ‘no hat no play’ as well, requiring hats to be worn during break times.
 - i. Primary Schools are able to negotiate if play under a COLA is a reasonable variance of the no hat no play rule, dependent on size of COLA and numbers of students.
- b. The shoes outlined in the school’s uniform expectations must:
 - i. be sturdy and properly fastened shoes that provide adequate support for growing feet and active bodies, providing arch and heel support, grip and stability;
 - ii. comply with WHS requirements for TAS, Science and PE (when applicable); and
 - iii. meet a prescribed standard for being polishable and of one standard colour as per the uniform (white or black). Minimal visible branding of any kind.
- c. A reasonable uniform length for students typically balances comfort, practicality, and modesty. For skirts to provide ease of movement and ensure appropriateness, a guideline of just above the knee and no shorter than mid-thigh. Shorts are to reach below the mid-thigh for the same reasons.

Hair Standards

(21) While style and length of hair are individual, the following guidelines must be implemented in schools:

Hair Style/ Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hair styles deemed extreme by the Principal are not permitted. This may include razor cuts, shaved logos, and mohawks.• If a student’s hair is long enough to hide their eyes or hang across their face, it must always be tied back or tied away from their eyes and face.• If hair is long enough, students should be encouraged to have it tied back and off the neck for hygiene and comfort reasons. In some instances, this is a mandatory requirement given WHS legislation, e.g TAS and Science.
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Hair Accessories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All hair accessories are to comply with school identity (colours) and not impinge on the wearing of the school hat.
Hair colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hair colour should always be kept to natural hues.
Facial Hair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facial hair is to be reasonable and tidy.

Jewellery, Nails and Makeup Standards

(22) While these elements allow for individual expression, the following requirements are implemented to assist schools in maintaining consistent expectations and adherence to WHS regulations:

Necklace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One necklace is permitted and is to be tucked under the uniform.
Bracelet/ Ring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One bracelet and one ring are permitted to be worn. However, it cannot be a hard bangle as this presents a risk of injury. The bracelet that is worn cannot present a distraction to others in the room (jangling).
Watch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A watch is permitted. Smart watches are governed by the Schools Student Mobile Phone and Wearable Technologies Guideline and the individual School Specific Statement of Practice for mobile phones and wearable technologies. In such cases, students would be required to adjust the settings of their wearable technologies so that it acts as a watch only during school hours.
Piercings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to two piercings in each ear are permitted. These must be studs or small sleepers with no potential for grabbing. No other facial or body piercings should be visible at any time while wearing the school uniform.
Make Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If worn, make-up should always be natural, including minimal eye makeup used – only natural in colour, shape and size. Make Up is not recommended for Primary aged students.
Nail Varnish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nail varnish may be worn. This is to be natural colours only with no embellishments (embedded gems or sparkles). The length of the nail should not present a risk in any lesson or physical activity, specifically TAS and Science lessons.

Approval Requirements for Managing Modification or Replacement of Existing School Uniforms

(23) This section outlines the required considerations, consultation processes, and approvals that must be undertaken when a school proposes any modification, redesign, or replacement of existing school uniform items. It ensures decisions are financially responsible, culturally respectful, consistent with Catholic Identity, compliant with governance obligations and aligned with Diocesan branding.

(24) A clear system-wide process is embedded into this procedure to support schools in responding to, managing and implementing any modification and/or replacement of uniform items or whole school uniform. This component does not need to be expanded further in the School Specific Statement of Practice – Uniform Expectations, as this process can be referenced directly when the situation arises.

(25) Schools must commit proportionate consideration to the following components:

- a. Catholic Identity and alignment (Religious Education & Spirituality Team)
 - i. The Religious Education and Spirituality Team must review proposed changes to ensure alignment with Catholic Identity, symbolism, and values.
 - ii. Proposed colour choices, motifs, or designs must not conflict with Catholic ethos or the sacred identity of the school.

(26) Financial Considerations

- a. The school must undertake a financial impact assessment to determine the cost implications for families and the wider community.
- b. If the school operates an onsite Uniform Shop, current stock must be reviewed to identify items at risk of becoming redundant.
- c. A stock transition plan must be developed, including timeframes for phasing-in and phasing-out items.
- d. Procurement decisions must align with diocesan financial management guidelines and risk management expectations.

(27) Governance and Contractual Requirements

- a. Existing uniform supplier contracts must be reviewed to identify any obligations, exclusivity clauses, notice periods, or restrictions.
- b. The school must confirm who holds intellectual property rights for current and proposed uniform designs.
- c. Any new artwork, symbols, patterns, or visual elements (beyond the authorised school logo) must undergo a copyright and permissions review.
- d. Documentation of the decision-making process must be maintained in accordance with Diocesan governance standards.

(28) Aboriginal Education Team Consultation

- a. The Aboriginal Education Team must be consulted to ensure all cultural elements are appropriate, respectful, and follow correct protocols.
- b. If Aboriginal artwork or language elements are proposed, consultation with the appropriate local Aboriginal community must be undertaken.
- c. Permissions and acknowledgments of artworks or language must be formally documented.

(29) Communications & Marketing Review

- a. The Communications & Marketing Team must verify that the proposed designs are consistent with diocesan branding guidelines, including colour accuracy and logo placement.
- b. Updated uniform images must be provided for school and diocesan platforms.
- c. A parent and community communications plan must be developed to support implementation.

(30) For full replacement and/ or significant change to uniform expectations, a FACE Forum Uniform Sub Committee should be formed to be part of the consultation process.

(31) The Uniform Sub Committee must comprise of school workers, parish delegate, parents and students.

(32) When considering minor modifications and/or addition or removal of an item, communication within the FACE Forum and in newsletters must occur, with parents and carers invited to submit feedback via email and/or response to a survey.

(33) The consultation required and the timeline for full implementation of any uniform modification are determined by the extent of the modification. This is outlined in the table below:

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION OF LEVEL CHANGE	CONSULTATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE	IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGE
Full Replacement	More than 90% is being replaced. Where the resulting uniform is a complete visual identity change.	Full consultation with all stakeholders, including school workers, parish priest, students and parents, which includes surveying these parties regarding their preferences and having this inform both the options procured and the final selection. It also involves establishing a FACE Forum Uniform Modification Sub Committee that involves both parents and students, who discuss options in greater detail before presenting to all stakeholders for feedback. Initial Consultation with the Director or Assistant Director Schools regarding the process being undertaken is advised. Final approval must be sought from the Director of Schools in consultation with the Bishop.	Consultation and Approval can take up to 12 months 3 years or more implementation period.
Significant Modifications	A change of up to three aspects/items of the uniform is proposed, which will result in a completely new visual look for that aspect (e.g. change of sports shirt).	Full consultation with all stakeholders, including school workers, students, parish representatives and parents, which includes surveying these parties regarding their preferences and having this inform both the options procured and the final selection. It may also involve establishing a FACE Forum Uniform Modification Sub Committee that involves both parents and students, who discuss options in greater detail before presenting to all stakeholders for feedback.	Consultation of less than 12 months 3 year implementation period
Minor Modification	Two or less items proposed to undergo minor change, including different styling/cut of an item (pants, blouse) with only minimal change evident.	Parent informed via FACE meeting and Newsletter of the planned modification and reasons behind it (supplier issue, wear and tear decision, style issue). Invitation to feedback on proposed change.	Minor modification is rolled out as per parent purchase of new uniform items in the coming years but should take no longer than 3 years.
Addition (or removal) of an item	An addition (or removal) of an item is added without changing the existing uniform expectations. This may include options for shorts/skorts/pants for girls or adding an additional layer in winter.	Parents informed via FACE Forum and Newsletter of the planned addition or removal and reasons behind it (extra layer of warmth, short options for all students or removal of item because of parent feedback). Invitation to provide feedback on proposed addition or removal.	Additional item is rolled out as per parent purchase of this when applicable. No expectation that this replaces existing item. Removal or addition of an item can be on school timeline once consultation has been conducted.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION OF LEVEL CHANGE	CONSULTATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE	IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGE
<p>Specialised item for an identified cohort</p>	<p>A specific item (usually a shirt or jumper) made available to a specific cohort (such as a graduating class) with the allowance that it can be worn in addition to or in place of an existing uniform item for that year. Can also apply to specific teams where the item is allowed to be worn as uniform, on and off the field.</p>	<p>Consultation with specific cohort about the availability of the item in place of the existing school uniform item. Schools are to ensure the specific items still comply with the school identity promoted through the existing uniform. The school crest must be prominent within the design and not modified in any way. Consideration must be given to ensure the item does not depart too far from the school's catholic identity.</p>	<p>If parents' investment in the additional item is to be warranted, the item should be readied late in the year prior to it being allowed as an additional item. The expectations of when/ how it will replace existing uniform items to be embedded in the process.</p>

Section 5 - Document Review

(34) This procedure will be reviewed when there is a legislative change, organisational change, delegations change, technology change or at least every 3 years to ensure it continues to be current and effective.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	23rd March 2026
Review Date	23rd March 2029
Approval Authority	Assistant Director Catholic Schools
Approval Date	23rd March 2026
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Unit Head	Jacqueline Wilkinson Director Catholic Schools
Enquiries Contact	Catholic Schools

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Wearable Technologies" - Electronic devices that can be worn as accessories that perform similar functions as mobile phone such as calls, messages, audio recording, timers and health monitoring. Such devices can take many different forms, including smart watches, jewellery, accessories, medical devices, and clothing or elements of clothing. Wearable technologies also refer to headphones which connect to mobile devices to receive calls.

"School Specific Statement of Practice" - A School Specific Statement of Practice outlines the implementation of Diocesan Policy Documents requires a specific application within the school context. School Specific Statement of Practice does not replicate any information already contained in the Diocesan policy or procedures but provides context about how the school will implement the documents in each unique context.