

Physically Active Uniform



Description: The introduction of a new **uniform that supports physical activity** (e.g. polo shirt, comfortable trousers and appropriate footwear for activity during break times) and more relaxed rules about uniforms at school.

Will this change affect a lot of students within a school?

- **All students** are affected by uniforms/uniform policies within a school.

Will this change affect all students equally?

- Uniform changes could potentially be more effective for increasing physical activity in **girls**, as they most often report school uniform as a barrier to being active.
- Studies show that **boys** don't usually see their uniform as a barrier to activity in school. However, this does depend on the specific school policies about uniforms. For example, some schools do not allow uniforms to get dirty during the day, (e.g., from playing football at lunch), which acts as a barrier to activity during break times and lunch times.

Will people like this change?

- Within research evidence and our CASE advisory groups, uniform changes (i.e., to make the uniform more suited to physical activity) were considered acceptable by students.
- There are some individuals and groups that hold the belief that formal **uniforms lead to better behaviour and academic success** (although the evidence for this is very mixed) - therefore some **schools** and **parents** might oppose a more 'physically active' uniform.

How easy is it to make this change?

- The initial cost of a new uniform may be a barrier for some **parents**.
- There are many examples of schools that have successfully put into place more relaxed/activity permissive uniforms, indicating that introducing and maintaining this may not be a problem.

Will it work?

- There is limited evidence for the effects of **uniform changes** on adolescent activity.
- In **primary schools**, one study showed that a sports uniform (opposed to a more traditional 'winter' uniform) was associated with greater activity in 10-year old girls.
- Evidence is mixed regarding whether a **traditional 'smart' uniform** positively impacts behaviour and achievement in school- there is no evidence to suggest an activity friendly uniform is associated with any negative academic outcomes.

How much will it cost?

- The costs of school uniform would affect parents, not the school. The average total expenditure on school uniform for the 2014/15 school year was approximately **£200** per child.
- The additional costs of this policy change (compared to buying a standard uniform) are likely to be zero or even negative, i.e. a switch from the standard uniform to the activity friendly one would **save money**. This is because some of the more pre-professional dress (blazer, tie) could be dropped.
- Information to parents would cost the school a relatively small amount too (a one off cost):
 - There may be a small cost for producing and printing leaflets, but this will depend on the size of the school.