What is a school uniform?

The word ‘uniform’ means literally 'having the same form'. So a school uniform means that every kid in the school wears the same clothes (though girls often have a different uniform to boys).

I can almost hear some of you say, "Why don't the teachers have to wear school uniform then?" Well let's think of some answers.

> They are not kids, they are adults.
> Many of them will wear a sort of uniform, in that they wear clothes which are suitable for the job that they do.
> They need to look different so that everyone can see that they are the teachers!
> Teachers have to wear badges to show that they are teachers at that school.
> When they were kids they probably had to wear school uniform.
> Uniforms show that you are part of the same group (students), and teachers are not part of the same group as yourselves.
> Teachers would not look as good as you do in school uniform!
> Some things are not negotiable.

Good things about school uniform

Having a school uniform gives you an identity. It means that you belong in that particular school. You are part of a special group of people and you belong in that group.

Having a school uniform is also good because:

> You don't have to worry about what to wear on a school day.
> You know that everyone else will be wearing school uniform.
> You can save your 'good' stuff for nights and weekends.
> The clothes are usually practical and comfortable to wear.
> Uniforms can be handed down to other kids in the family.
> You can sell or buy second-hand uniform at the school.
> With a uniform, you have got most of the clothes you need to wear, so you don't need as many casual clothes, and if you are growing quickly that will be a big saving for Mum, Dad or whoever buys your clothes.
> It promotes equity because everyone has to wear the same.
> There is less pressure on kids to wear the latest fashion, which may not be suitable for wearing all day.
Most primary schools don’t have change rooms or showers, so there is nowhere suitable for changing into sports clothes for sports lessons. So casual and comfortable clothes that can be OK to wear when doing anything at all are best.

**Bad things about school uniform**

- Some school uniforms are very formal looking and may take a lot of looking after.
- Skirts or formal pants are not good for doing sport or running around at lunchtime or recess.
- Some uniforms are a bit too casual and comfortable and can look rather sloppy and not very neat.
- School uniforms are rarely fashionable.
- They can be expensive.
- You can get fed up of wearing the same old, same old every day.
- You get into trouble if you don’t wear uniform.

**What if there is no uniform at your school?**

Some schools don't have uniforms and kids can wear what they like. Sometimes this is OK but it can be a nightmare for yourself and the people who look after you. Trying to keep up with the clothes that you need for 5 days every week plus weekends, sports and club activities can be expensive and hard to organise.

Some kids may have lots of clothes and others very few, so some kids could be mean to other kids.

Your ‘good’ clothes could get really messed up with paint or torn on climbing equipment, or be too tight or too short for you to want to do sport or gymnastics, drama or just sitting on the ground chatting with friends, so you may not want to join in these activities which make life so much fun.

**Kids say**

- "School uniform's cool.  
  I wear it every day  
  All my friends do too  
  I change when I get home  
  And throw it in the wash.  
  School uniform's cool."

- Uniform
  Nice
  Interesting
  Fun
  Original
  Respectable
  Maroon and blue are good colours too!
> "It’s good when you go on an excursion because you can see where everybody is."
> "It’s good to feel part of the group."

**Dr Kate says**

To be a happy healthy kid you need to get out and exercise every day. Often school uniforms are like sports clothes and that means you can move around easily. Pulling on a jumper or taking it off can keep you comfortable indoors or out. Don't forget to wear a hat during the summer and winter terms. All schools have a 'no hat, no play' policy and the school hat will have been chosen to protect you from the problems caused by the sun.

If your school has had the same uniform for years then maybe it's time for a change. If your school has a Student Council then you might ask your class rep to bring up the subject of changing your school uniform at the next meeting.

Schools encourage kids to think, so have some ideas ready for your class rep to take with her.