

# Facts Against School Uniforms

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# Restricting Individuality

- The school uniform debate has been a hot one for years, and while both sides of the debate have many valid points, there are several facts against school uniforms that must be considered when discussing this type of dress code policy.
- One of the biggest arguments students make against school uniforms is that being required to wear identical clothes restricts their individuality and right to free expression, which can in turn add more emotional stress to an already turbulent adolescence.



# Academic Arguments



Advocates of school uniforms will say that freeing students from fashion concerns will allow them to focus on their studies, but there is no large scale conclusive evidence that school uniforms have any effect on students' grades. More important factors are students' study habits, parental support, classroom materials, and instruction quality.

# Inappropriate Dress

Some school uniform designs are inappropriate for younger students who will participate in recess or physical education without changing clothes. Skirts and dress slacks are inappropriate for gym activities, and light colors such as tan, white, and sky blue stain easily, which can add an extra burden on parents to buy more uniforms or pay for extra cleaning.



# Clothing Comfort

Not all school uniform styles are comfortable for all body shapes and sizes. Requiring students to wear garments they are not comfortable in can add to their anxieties about personal appearance, weight, and body proportions, which may lead to unhealthy and dangerous eating, diet, and exercise habits.



# Uniform Availability



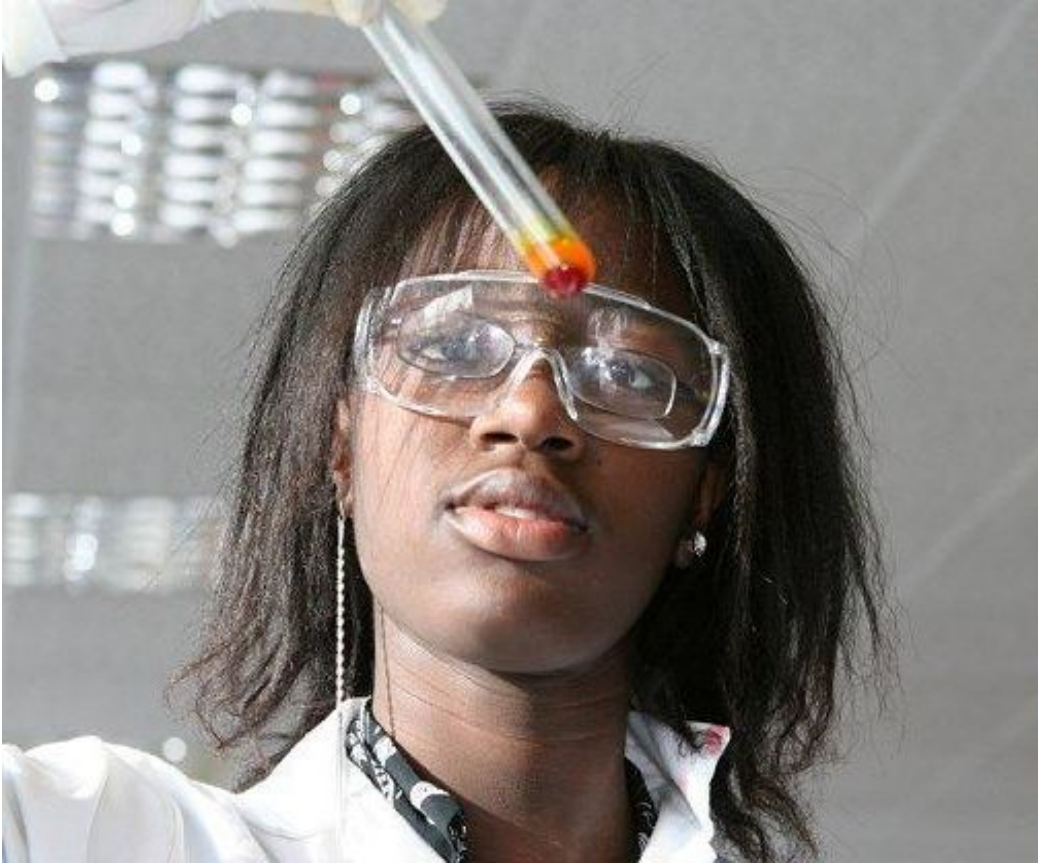
Not all parents will have easy access to affordable stores where they can buy school uniforms in the approved styles and colors. Furthermore, requiring certain uniform styles may force parents to purchase more expensive clothing that their budget may not accommodate.

# Religious Freedom

Requiring students to wear school uniforms may be a First Amendment violation of their religious freedom if their faith requires them to wear particular garments that are in conflict with the uniform policy. While schools can offer waivers to allow students to wear clothing that is acceptable to their faith, doing so singles out students and can cause intolerance.



# School Safety



Not all school uniform styles are appropriate for all school activities. Short sleeves and skirts may not be suitable for work in a science classroom, for example, and many uniforms are not appropriate for recess, home economics classes, or vocational education and other hands on classes.

# Uniform Cost



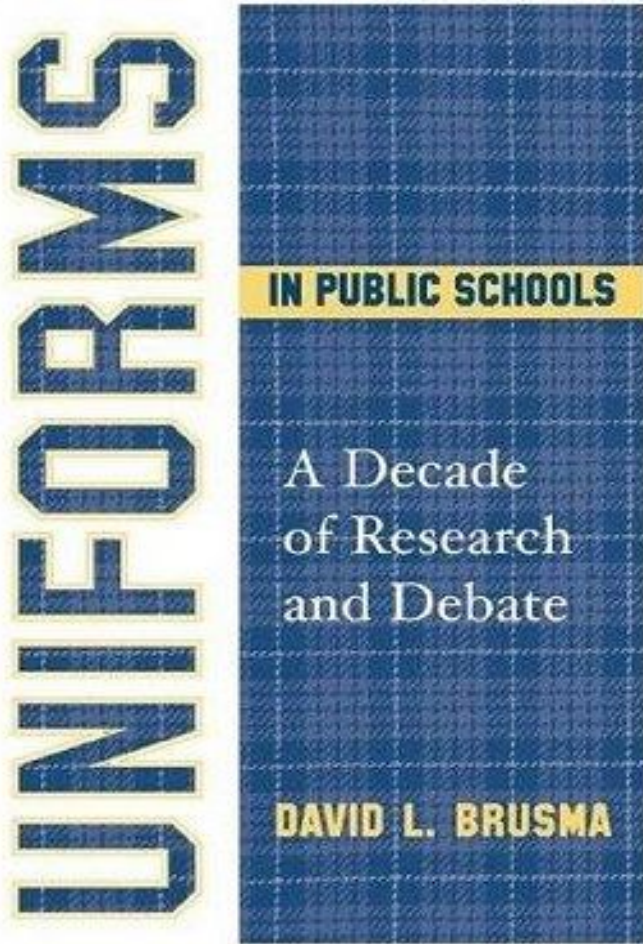
More elaborate uniforms that require ties, blazers, and specific shoe styles have much higher price tags than other school clothing choices. This can make some school uniforms a heavy burden on parents' budgets, particularly when coupled with the rising costs of school activities and fees, lunches, and other expenses.

# Dress Code Violations



Despite the best intentions behind school uniforms, many students will not wear them appropriately. Untucked shirts, loosened ties, missing belts, unbuttoned shirts, and other violations require teachers to spend more time enforcing a uniform dress code and less time focusing on classroom instruction.

# Read the Research



- Learn more about the facts against school uniforms by staying involved with the PTA and other school organizations, reading educational literature, and keeping up on news stories involving school dress codes. For more information about school uniforms, visit these additional LoveToKnow Kids articles:
- [Pros and Cons of School Uniforms](#)
- [School Uniform Debate](#)
- [School Uniforms](#)
- [Against School Uniforms](#)
- [History of School Uniforms](#)

## School Uniform Debate By Misty Karam

In the ongoing school uniform debate, the [proponents](#) seem to be winning, as an increasing number of schools are implementing strict dress codes.

### Defining School Uniforms

Even among folks who support mandatory [school uniforms](#), there is a wide range of ideas about what constitutes a uniform. In some school districts, students wear a true uniform, where all students must wear identical clothing. These are often similar to uniforms seen in traditional private school settings. In less rigid districts, students are given choices from several acceptable options. For example, a flexible school uniform policy might require:

- Blue or khaki slacks, shorts, or skirts; no jeans.
- White, blue, or red collared shirt.
- Neat and clean hair.
- Pants belted at the waist.

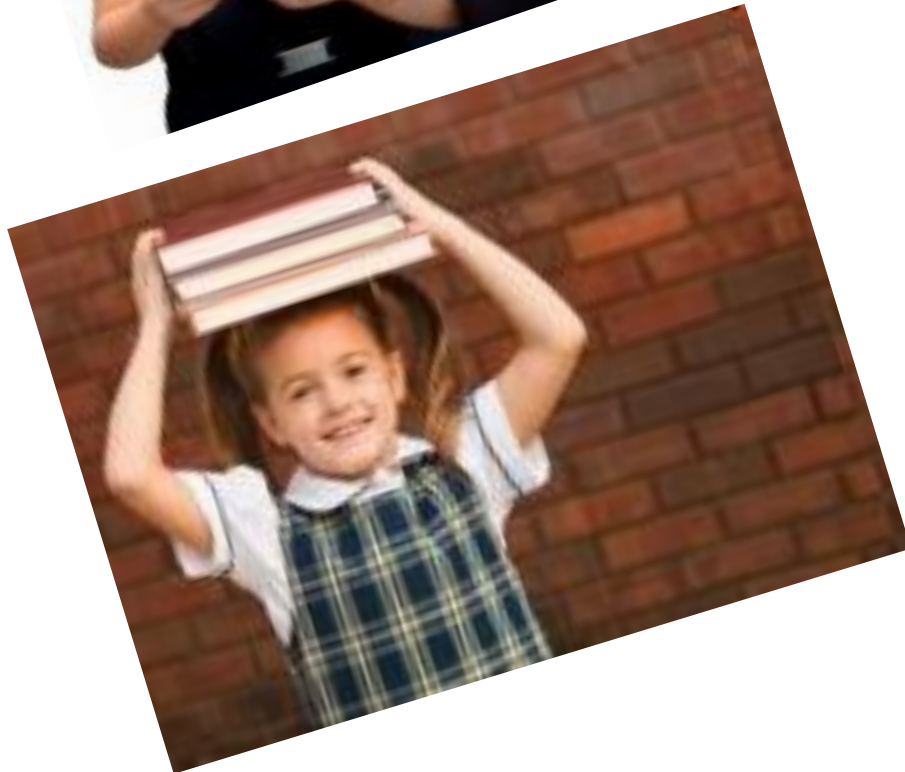
### School Uniform Debate: Pros

Educators and legislators cite many [benefits of school uniforms](#). Most of these reasons pertain to school performance and safety. Parents seem to be evenly split in this often heated [debate](#).

### School Safety

Proponents of strict dress codes believe that uniforms decrease or eliminate gang activity in schools. Since most gangs are recognized by the [clothing](#), hats, colors, or jewelry they wear, school uniforms are believed to remove some of the intimidation. Uniforms can also make it difficult for rival gangs to recognize each other by sight. This benefit is likely lost in schools that allow less choices in the implementation of the uniform.





## Learning Environment

A school uniform is also said to remove many distractions from the classroom, forcing students to focus more on education. When given freedom in dress codes, students tend to wear things that are counterproductive to learning, such as:

- Provocative clothing
- Unusual or distracting [hair styles](#)
- Noisy jewelry
- Bright, inappropriate [makeup](#)
- Without the distractions of fashion, many educators believe that learning will improve.

## Economical Advantages

Proponents say that uniforms are much less expensive for parents, as they have less clothing to buy. In schools with one required uniform, most students only need one or two sets. Although wear and tear on the clothing could be considerable, proponents still say that uniforms are much more economical than the usual brand name fare that many students would otherwise wear.

## Increase in Self Esteem

Proponents also believe that uniforms are helpful for lower income children, who are unable to afford the latest styles. Students who are dressed in discount or tattered clothing are often teased and ridiculed by more affluent classmates. This can be a huge blow to a developing ego. Many experts think that uniforms eliminate the class and social distinctions that normally exist in schools.

# What Do Kids Think About School Uniforms: Pros and Cons



## Uniform Pros

There are some students who [support](#) the idea of uniforms, although they may feel like a minority. Their reasons for agreeing with the implementation of uniforms include the following:

**Uniforms eliminate clothing competition.** Kids who wear uniforms don't feel the need to compete with each other on buying the latest, and sometimes most expensive, clothing brands.

**Uniforms eliminate choices.** Some kids love the idea of not having to decide what to wear each day. Instead of spending time putting together outfits, they simply put on their uniforms.

**Uniforms create equality.** Kids who are proponents of uniforms also point to the fact that everyone looks the virtually the same, cutting down on socio-economic cliques throughout the school.

The vast majority of kids don't want to dress alike, and they feel that in doing so, they lose their individual identities. Other reasons why kids don't want to wear school uniforms include the following:

**School uniforms are ugly.** They don't follow any of the current fashion trends, and many uniforms have been essentially the same for generations. Kids feel that uniform colors and styles are too old-fashioned.

**School uniforms restrict individuality.** Kids love to experiment with their clothing and accessories. They already often feel constricted by the rules and regulations of the classroom, and the requirement of school uniforms only further emphasizes that restricted feeling.

**School uniforms do not save money.** One theory behind uniforms is that they save families money. However, kids are quick to point out that they still want to buy stylish clothing to wear outside of school. This means that students must essentially have two wardrobes. However, if they didn't have uniforms, they could wear a lot of their same clothes to school.

**Uniforms aren't flattering to all body types.** Uniform requirements often require tucked in shirts for boys and girls and skirts for girls. Some kids feel that these clothing styles aren't very flattering to certain body styles, and they increase students' feelings of insecurity.