Uniform Policy
September 2026

Aims

Sussex Alternative Provision College (APC) is committed to creating school environments in which pupils feel that they belong, are ready to learn and understand the expectations associated with being part of a school community.

Our uniform is an important part of this. It provides pupils with a shared APC identity, promotes belonging and pride in our school, establishes clear and consistent expectations and contributes to a purposeful environment that is ready for learning.
As a short-stay Alternative Provision, a key part of our role is preparing pupils for their next stage of education. Most mainstream and specialist schools have expectations in relation to uniform, appearance and being appropriately equipped for school. Maintaining these expectations while pupils attend APC therefore supports reintegration, transition and preparation for returning to or moving on to another education setting.

Our approach to uniform also recognises that pupils have different needs. Following feedback from our young people, including around comfort and sensory needs, we have introduced greater choice while maintaining a clear APC identity and consistent expectations.

This policy aims to:

- Establish clear and consistent expectations for pupils attending APC centres;
- Provide a uniform that promotes belonging, identity, pride and readiness to learn;
- Support pupils in maintaining the expectations associated with attending school and preparing for reintegration;
- Provide appropriate choice while maintaining clear school expectations;
- Recognise sensory, physical, religious and individual needs;
- Maintain appropriate standards of safety, hygiene and presentation;
- Keep uniform costs as affordable as possible for families; and
- Ensure pupils have the equipment they require to participate fully in their education.
- Students wear appropriate dark-colored trousers

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier where required, to ensure it continues to reflect the context and needs of APC, our pupils and families, and any relevant changes to legislation or guidance. The review will ensure that our approach remains inclusive, practical, affordable and safe, while supporting belonging, readiness to learn and successful reintegration and transition.

Scope

This policy applies to all primary and secondary pupils attending an APC centre as part of their educational placement, regardless of their registration status.

This includes pupils who:

- are solely registered with APC following permanent exclusion or another agreed admission route;
- remain registered with another school and attend APC through a directed off-site placement, including pupils attending APC as an intervention because they are at risk of exclusion; and
- are dual registered where APC centre attendance forms part of their agreed educational placement.

The same expectations apply to pupils attending APC centres regardless of whether APC is their sole registered school or whether they remain registered with another school.

The policy does not routinely apply to pupils accessing Blended Learning away from an APC centre or pupils receiving 3R outreach support within their existing school or community setting. Those pupils should follow the dress and equipment expectations applicable to the setting in which their education is being delivered.

Where a pupil accessing another APC service also attends an APC centre as part of their programme, this policy will apply during their centre attendance.

Equality, Inclusion and Pupil Voice

APC is an inclusive school and is committed to ensuring that our uniform expectations are applied fairly and without discrimination. Our uniform has been reviewed following feedback from our pupils. Young people told us that comfort, sensory preferences and the practicalities of traditional school uniform can affect their experience of wearing it.

In response, APC has introduced two equally acceptable uniform options: a standard school uniform option and a PE uniform option. This provides pupils with greater choice while retaining a consistent APC identity and clear school expectations.

Our uniform is gender neutral and pupils may choose whichever approved uniform option they feel most comfortable wearing.

We recognise that some pupils may require reasonable adjustments because of disability, sensory or physical need, religion or another protected characteristic. Parents/carers should discuss this with the relevant Head of School. Any adjustment will be considered individually and must also be compatible with health, safety and the activities being undertaken.

Keeping Uniform Affordable

APC recognises the importance of keeping the cost of school uniform proportionate and affordable for families. Cost has been carefully considered in the design of our uniform and the selection of garments. We have deliberately limited the number of specialist and branded items required and sought to keep prices as low as reasonably possible.

APC-branded garments are purchased directly from the school. Parents/carers are expected to purchase the required APC uniform as part of the admission and induction process.

Pupils may continue to wear plain dark school trousers, tailored shorts or skirts from their previous or home school, provided they meet APC's uniform expectations. Alternatively, these items may be purchased from any retailer. There is no requirement for parents/carers to purchase new trousers, shorts or skirts specifically for attending APC.

APC Uniform Expectations

All primary and secondary pupils attending an APC centre are expected to attend school wearing one of the two approved APC uniform options. The two options have equal status. Pupils may choose the option that best meets their needs and preferences and may move between the two options from day to day, provided that what they wear meets the requirements of this policy.

Option 1 – Standard Uniform

Pupils may wear:

Primary	Secondary
APC branded polo shirt APC branded jumper Plain dark school trousers Plain dark tailored shorts Plain dark skirt Plain dark sports leggings, other approved APC PE bottoms Sensible, safe footwear.	APC branded polo shirt APC branded jumper Plain dark school trousers Plain dark tailored shorts Plain dark skirt Plain dark sports leggings other approved APC PE bottoms Sensible, safe footwear.

Option 2 – PE Uniform
Pupils may wear:

Primary	Secondary
• APC branded PE T-shirt • APC Fleece • APC sports shorts (unbranded) • APC sports leggings or other approved APC PE bottoms • Sensible, safe footwear	• APC branded PE T-shirt • APC branded PE mid-layer • APC sports shorts • APC sports leggings or other approved APC PE bottoms • Sensible, safe footwear

The PE uniform is a full APC uniform option, rather than simply clothing to be worn during PE lessons. There is therefore no requirement for pupils to change into PE kit during the school day. A pupil choosing the PE option may wear it throughout the school day.

Dark trousers, tailored shorts and skirts do not need to be purchased from APC and may be obtained from any suitable retailer.

Tracksuit bottoms and jogging bottoms are not acceptable as an alternative to dark school trousers, tailored shorts or a skirt under the standard uniform option.

Uniform can be purchased from your APC Centre. Please see link to order form.

Additional Uniform Expectations
Outdoor coats may be worn when travelling to and from school and when appropriate for outdoor activities. Coats should be removed when pupils arrive at their centre and should not normally be worn during lessons or around the school building.

Appearance, Hygiene and Safety
Our approach to appearance is intended to be reasonable and proportionate while ensuring pupils are appropriately presented and able to participate safely in all aspects of school life. Health, safety and hygiene requirements will always take priority where an aspect of a pupil's clothing or appearance creates a risk to themselves or others.

Hair
Pupils may wear their hair in a style appropriate for school. Where required for a particular activity, long hair must be tied back for safety or hygiene reasons. This particularly applies during cooking and food preparation and may also apply during PE, boxing, vocational activities and other practical learning where loose hair could create a risk.

Make-up
Should be natural and age-appropriate for the school environment. Staff may ask a pupil to remove or reduce make-up where it is considered inappropriate for school or where it creates a health, hygiene or safety concern in relation to a particular activity.

Nails
Should be maintained at an appropriate and safe length for school. Long artificial or acrylic nails are not considered appropriate for school. They can restrict safe participation in practical and physical activities and can present a safety risk to the pupil and others.

Consideration must be given to participation in PE, Boxing, Sport, Cooking and practical or vocational activities. Where the length or type of a pupil's nails creates a safety risk, the pupil will not be able to participate in the relevant activity until the risk has been addressed.

Jewellery
Should be kept to a minimum and must not compromise pupil or staff safety. Jewellery must be removed for PE, boxing and any other physical or practical activity where it presents a health and safety risk.

Where necessary, APC can provide secure storage pouches, or another agreed safe-storage arrangement for jewellery and personal items while pupils participate in these activities. Pupils are expected to follow staff instructions regarding the removal and safe storage of jewellery and other personal items.

PE, Boxing and Practical Activities
Participation in physical, vocational and practical activity is an important part of the APC curriculum.

Health and safety requirements will therefore take priority when pupils participate in:

- PE and Sport;
- Boxing;
- Cooking and Food Preparation;
- Vocational and Practical Learning;
- Outdoor Education; and
    - any other activity where clothing, footwear, jewellery, nails, hair or personal items could present a risk.
- Jewellery must be removed for PE and boxing, and pupils must have nails of an appropriate length to participate safely.
- Long hair must be tied back where required for hygiene or safety.

Staff will explain the safety requirements associated with an activity and pupils are expected to follow reasonable instructions.

Where a pupil cannot participate safely because of clothing, jewellery, nails or another avoidable safety issue, they may be unable to participate in the activity, and an alternative activity may be provided.

Equipment and School Bags

APC will provide pupils with all essential equipment required for the school day and curriculum.

This includes the stationery, learning resources and specialist equipment required to participate in lessons and activities. Pupils are therefore not expected to bring their own stationery, learning equipment or specialist resources into school unless specifically requested by a member of staff.

Where pupils bring a school bag, backpack or other personal bag to an APC centre, it must be handed in on arrival. Bags will be stored securely during the school day and returned to pupils at the end of the school day.

This arrangement supports us in maintaining safe, organised and purposeful learning environments while ensuring pupils have access to everything they require for their education.

Any essential personal, medical, sensory or accessibility items required by a pupil during the school day will remain accessible through arrangements agreed with the pupil and relevant staff.

Expectations of Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend their APC centre wearing one of the approved APC uniform options;
- remove outdoor coats on arrival;
- not wear hoodies as part of their school clothing;
- not wear tracksuit or jogging bottoms as an alternative to the standard uniform;
- handbags in on arrival as required;
- follow reasonable instructions relating to clothing, jewellery, hair and nails;
- remove jewellery when required for PE, boxing and practical activities;
- maintain nails at a safe and appropriate length;
- tie long hair back when required for hygiene or safety;
- use school equipment appropriately; and
- take appropriate care of APC uniform, school equipment and facilities.

Expectations of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to support the school's uniform and equipment expectations and ensure that their child attends APC appropriately dressed. For pupils who are solely registered with APC, for example following permanent exclusion, these expectations form part of attending APC as their school.

For pupils attending APC through a directed off-site placement, for example pupils attending as an intervention because they are at risk of exclusion, the pupil may remain registered with their home school but is attending an APC school environment. While attending APC, they are therefore expected to follow APC's uniform, equipment, behaviour and safety expectations.

Parents/carers are expected to purchase the required APC uniform as part of the admission and induction process and ensure their child attends wearing one of the approved options. Parents/carers should speak with their child's Head of School where affordability, sensory need, disability, religious requirement or another individual circumstance creates difficulty in meeting the policy. We encourage families to raise concerns early so that barriers can be understood and reasonable and appropriate solutions agreed.

Expectations of Staff

All staff have a responsibility to promote the expectations within this policy consistently and positively. Staff should model and reinforce the importance of pupils being appropriately dressed, equipped and ready for learning while recognising that the circumstances of pupils attending Sussex APC can be complex.

Where a pupil arrives without the correct uniform or does not meet another expectation within this policy, staff should first seek to understand why and identify whether there is a practical, financial, sensory, SEND or other barrier that needs addressing. Staff should work constructively with pupils and families to remove barriers where reasonably possible while maintaining clear and consistent expectations.

Staff are responsible for applying relevant health and safety requirements during PE, boxing, cooking, vocational learning and other practical activities. Where concerns persist without an identified or agreed reason, they should be addressed through the school's usual behaviour and pastoral arrangements and escalated to the Head of School where appropriate.

Non-Compliance

APC will take a proportionate and pupil-centred approach where pupils do not meet the expectations within this policy. Our first response will be to understand the reason for non-compliance, reinforce the expectation and identify whether there is a barrier that can reasonably be addressed. Reasonable adjustments will be considered, where appropriate.

The introduction of two uniform options is intended to provide pupils with greater choice and recognise individual and sensory needs. However, choice exists within the APC uniform expectations; uniform itself is not optional for pupils attending our centres.

Persistent refusal to meet the expectations of this policy, where there is no agreed reasonable adjustment or identified barrier, will be addressed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Health and safety requirements are not discretionary. Where clothing, footwear, jewellery, nails, hair or another item means that a pupil cannot safely participate in a particular activity, the pupil may be prevented from participating until the risk has been appropriately addressed.

Links to other policies

This policy should be read alongside the schools:

- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality information and objectives
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy

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