REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL UNIFORM

Rationale for a change in Bideford College Uniform:
There are currently three different uniforms in place, which is confusing for students, parents/carers and staff and means some students look more ‘business-like’ and ‘smarter’ than others.

It is important for the students of Bideford College to feel as if their uniform is on a level playing field to that of other schools in the area. We want students to feel pride in their college and this should be demonstrated through the uniform they wear and how they wear it. We want students to look and feel at least as smart and business-like as the other schools in North Devon.

We would like to be able to make the school uniform rules easier for everyone to follow. This will enable students, staff and parents to work together with a clearer set of uniform expectations. Research suggests that a smarter uniform improves the communities’ perception of a school and helps to foster a sense of community and pride amongst the student body.

“We know that a school uniform policy can help reduce instances of classroom discipline and bullying, as well as improve student safety and attendance. The use of school uniforms, whether in public or private schools, has a powerful influence on school culture in ways that contribute to greater levels of student achievement”. www.naesp.org

“Uniforms create identity and a sense of community; they promote discipline and an ‘orderly atmosphere’.” National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations

“[Pupils felt that uniforms]… often directly contributed to a feeling of school pride, which they did not want to compromise by misbehaving outside the school gate.” Professor Margaret Harris (Oxford Brookes University survey)

It is important for students to feel pride in their uniform and to feel part of the process of changing it. As a result, all relevant parties – students, staff and parents have been surveyed as to their opinions regarding whether the uniform should change and what it might look like – focussing upon the premiss that the new uniform will be “at least to the standard of the current Ambassadors’ uniform”.

A new uniform should:
• look smart and business-like;
• be easy to enforce;
• allow all students to take a pride in their appearance;
• be cost effective for parents;
• be easy for parents to purchase and replace;
• be made of good quality, hard-wearing materials and washable.

The uniform we agree on will be:
• worn correctly by every student from year 7 to year 11;
• the same for all students;
• at least to the same standard as that of our current Ambassadors’ uniform.
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

What the students thought:

61% of students Year 7-10 voted in favour of changing the current school uniform.

**FITTED JACKET V BLAZER**
- 74% Fitted Jacket
- 26% Blazer

**WHICH COLOUR JACKET/BLAZER?**
- 82% Black
- 13% Navy
- 5% No Preference

**V NECK JUMPER (OPTIONAL)**
- 63% Yes
- 37% No

**DIFFERENT TIE COLOURS**
- 25% Yes
- 75% No

**GIRLS OPTIONS**
- 43% Pleated Skirt
- 46% Tailored Trousers
- 9% Tailored Shorts

**BOYS TAILORED SHORTS**
- 35% Yes
- 65% No
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD’S YEAR GROUP?

- 125 responses in year 7 out of a possible 252 (50% response rate).
- 107 responses in year 8 out of a possible 245 (44% response rate).
- 80 responses in year 9 out of a possible 214 (37% response rate).
- 83 responses in year 10 out of a possible 239 (35% response rate).

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD’S GENDER?

- 194 females
- 174 males

There were 368 responses to this question (39% response rate). 53% of those had girls at the school, 47% had boys.
DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD KEEP THE EXISTING COLLEGE UNIFORM?

We received only 340 responses overall to this question meaning that there was only a 36% response from parents. 47% of these said we should not keep the existing uniform. 53% said we should keep the existing uniform. 64% of parents did not respond to this survey.

SUMMARY OF PARENT/CARER COMMENTS

In favour of a uniform change:
A Blazer would be a smart option.
The current trousers they appear to wear are disgusting.
Definitive yes to blazers and tailored skirts.
I have no objections to the school adopting blazers.
As long as students wear the same uniform, we are happy.
Should be an option of trousers for girls.
As long as you can buy the skirt/trousers from a clothes shop, then it will be fine.
Boys should have the option of wearing shorts in the spring/summer time.
Fantastic news. We are firm believers in this and think it’s a great way forward for a new academy.
Keeping the uniform distinct from other local schools is important.

The topic of blazers and just how smart they would look came up multiple times in the comments:
My daughter is an Ambassador, this blazer is machine washable (perfect for the job).
Blazers would look a lot smarter.
Both my sons are keen to wear a blazer. They feel shabby compared to virtually every other secondary school in the area.

Against a uniform change:
The current uniform is practical and easy-care.
(Blazers) look dated and not contemporary.
It will create more hassle at home.
Ease of purchase is a concern.
For pupils in their final year it hardly seems worth it.
I believe the current uniform is acceptable if students comply.
It should be a more relaxed uniform.
Putting students in such a strict uniform does not allow them to be individuals.
Tailored shorts will make shopping very restrictive.

The subject of cost came up a number of times with the concern being that a new blazer would be far more expensive than the existing uniform. One of the key decision factors for the College is to ensure that it is cost appropriate and comparable with other schools in the area.
WOULD YOU PREFER A FITTED OR NON-FITTED BLAZER/JACKET?

169 out of 325 overall responses said they would prefer a fitted Jacket (52%)
156 out of 325 overall responses said they would prefer a non fitted Blazer (48%)

DO YOU HAVE A COLOUR PREFERENCE FOR JACKET/BLAZER?

147 out of 325 overall responses said No to a colour preference (45%)
178 out of 325 overall responses said Yes to a colour preference (55%)

Parents were asked to comment on their colour preference. Here is a summary of those comments.
A number of comments were repeated in different ways, so this section attempts to create a general summary of what was said.

IF YES WHICH COLOUR?
A colour to either compliment the trousers or to match.
A colour which is easily obtainable in many outlets to alleviate cost.
Although traditionally, Bideford College has been black-I think it’s time for a change.
As long as the colour was neutral.
Black x97
Black and red with yellow.
Black blazer x3
Black or dark blue x4
Black and dark grey
Black or navy Blue x13
I do not have a colour preference.
Definitely not black.
Grey or green
I think black always looks smart.
Not Black it looks sombre and uninspired.
Traditional Bideford College Black.
Traditional Black-red and gold being a Bideford old girl.

WOULD YOU LIKE THE OPTION OF A V-NECK JUMPER?

102 questionnaires out of the 333 overall responses said no to the option of a V-neck Jumper (31%)
231 questionnaires out of the 33 overall responses said yes to the option of a V-neck jumper (69%)

WOULD YOU LIKE THE OPTION OF DIFFERENT TIE COLOURS/STYLES LINKED TO SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES / SCHOOL GROUPS?

214 of the overall 333 responses said No to the option of different colours/styles linked to specific responsibilities/school groups (64%)
119 of the overall 333 responses said yes (36%)
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD BE A PREFERENCE FOR FEMALE STUDENTS?

Of 256 responses to this question:
37 responses preferred pleated skirts 14%
38 preferred straight skirt 15%
114 preferred tailored trousers 45%

WOULD YOU LIKE THE OPTION TO BE ABLE TO WEAR TAILORED SHORTS?

159 out of 329 overall responses said no to the option of being able to wear tailored shorts (48%)
170 out of 329 overall responses said yes to the option of being able to wear tailored shorts (52%)
STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Should we keep the current uniform?

- Yes: 16%
- No: 84%

Would you support a blazer/tie, smart trouser/skirt option?

- Yes: 86%
- No: 14%
As a result of the survey, the following options have been decided upon:

**GIRLS**
Black fitted/non fitted jacket with Bideford College emblem (compulsory)
White shirt
Tie (compulsory)
Black trousers or skirt/tailored shorts
V neck black sweater to be worn under the jacket (optional)
Black leather look shoes (with black laces)

**BOYS**
Black fitted/non fitted jacket with Bideford College emblem (compulsory)
White shirt
Tie (compulsory)
Black trousers/tailored shorts
V neck black sweater to be worn under the jacket (optional)
Black leather look shoes (with black laces)

Students will be given the option to choose either a fitted jacket or a non fitted blazer. Girls will be given the option of wearing either a pleated or straight skirt, tailored trousers or tailored shorts. Boys will be given the option of wearing tailored trousers or tailored shorts. Full details of suppliers and costs will follow in the summer term.

Please be assured that the cost of the uniform will compare favourably with other schools in the local area with similar uniform.

To ensure consistency regarding the shoes, the students will only be permitted to wear (as of September) the following shoes:

Please use the pictures below to guide you.

**NB** No trainers No canvas shoes