

Forced to wear a skirt

Task 1 – Brainstorm

Look at the following list of clothing items and accessories. Which things might not be suitable for wearing to school?

Mini skirts bikini tops body piercing tattoos jeans with holes
Tight jeans fur coats cropped tops tracksuits
loose long hair (boys and girls)
Brightly coloured hair jewellery platforms or high heels make up

- Can you think of the reasons why an item might not be suitable?
- Are any of these things banned from your school?

Task 2 – Discuss

- What are your school rules? Is there a dress code?
- Explain the rules – say what you are allowed/ expected to wear.
- Say what you are not allowed to come to school wearing.
- Compare your school with a classmate.

Task 3 – Introduction to report

School Uniform Report ...Forced to wear a skirt....

Each term the British press has reports of pupils being sent home from school. What is their **crime**? Not always bad behaviour. Sometimes it has something to do with fashion. Pink hair, **nose rings** and dangerous **heels** can cause a problem, but some schools are prepared to send pupils home if their school uniform is too short. Pupils often want to **customise** their uniform, change the style of their trousers, write on their **ties** or adapt their uniform jacket to suit the latest trends.

Task 4 – Read and find out

- Which speaker is proud of their school uniform?
- Which item of clothing causes the most problems?
- Are the rules stricter than in your school?
- Are the rules the same for boys and for girls?

UK students speak out:

I hate wearing our school skirt. It is no longer acceptable for girls to have to wear skirts. Making us wear them is totally sexist. In winter we are freezing and the boys are nice and warm in their trousers! It isn't fair. **Emma, 15 Liverpool**

Three years ago the parents voted for a uniform. It has saved us all loads of money. Everyone looks smart in their school sweatshirt. I think it's cool. We still have pressure to wear the latest trainers but at least there is no competition about clothes for school.

Martin, 16 Northern Ireland

My mate was sent home in June because the Head of Year said her skirt was too short. I mean, it's ridiculous. I would like to wear long shorts when it is hot but that isn't possible either. The skirts have to be knee length. It's like being in prison. I don't think it makes any difference to our school work or exam results! **Caitlin, 14 Edinburgh**

Task 5 – Discuss

Here are some more opinions from British teenagers. Divide the opinions into For (F) and Against (A). The first one has been done for you.

1. Uniforms keep pupils tidy and smart. **F**
2. Uniforms are ugly and old-fashioned.
3. Uniforms stop unfair comparisons between rich or poorer students.
4. Uniforms make choosing your clothes in the morning easier.
5. Uniforms are not democratic.
6. Uniforms do not allow teenagers to express their individual personalities.
7. Uniforms are good for discipline and give a serious tone to the school.