# Mossley Hollins High School uniform sparks debate over student comfort in heat



A recent controversy has brought to light the rigid uniform policies at Mossley Hollins High School in Tameside, with one parent expressing serious concerns about the comfort and wellbeing of students during warm weather. The school's requirements mandate pupils wear woolly tank tops, blazers, and ties, even in the heat, leading to accusations from parents that the rules are overly stringent and ignore the practical needs of students.

The school's communication indicated that while students could remove their blazers during lessons, they still needed to keep their ties and tank tops on at all times while on school premises. Parents have reported confusion over these guidelines, with one mother noting that despite the school stating the blazer was not mandatory in summer, her son was still instructed to wear it outside the classroom—a situation that is leading to discomfort among students.

The mother, whose son is in Year 10, described the tank tops as stifling and insufficient for ventilation. In her correspondence with the school, she questioned, “Can I ask why in extreme heat they need to wear the woolly tank top?” She argued that while appearances matter, particularly in a school environment, the comfort of students should supersede aesthetic concerns, especially in extreme weather conditions.

In response, the school defended its uniform policy as a means of promoting discipline, unity, and professionalism among students. The headteacher, Andrea Din, stated, "Our absolute priority is the wellbeing of our students." The school has taken some measures to improve comfort, such as allowing students to remove their tank tops during lessons and keeping classrooms ventilated. However, Din also acknowledged ongoing discussions about potentially reviewing the fabric of the tank tops to ensure they are fit for summer wear.

This situation is not unique to Mossley Hollins High School. Several schools across the UK have faced similar criticism and have adapted their uniform policies in response to rising temperatures. For example, during a heatwave in 2022, schools like St John’s CE Middle School Academy in Bromsgrove relaxed their dress codes to permit lighter clothing while Clapton Girls’ Academy in East London adjusted schedules to send students home early to avoid the hottest parts of the day. This trend reflects a growing understanding of the importance of comfort in educational environments, particularly during warm weather.

Moreover, the Scottish Government has issued guidance encouraging schools to develop flexible uniform policies that take seasonal changes into account. Recommendations include allowing for clothing items suited to warm weather, such as shorts or breathable fabrics, alongside an emphasis on inclusivity and affordability. Similarly, the UK Department for Education has urged governing bodies to involve parents and pupils in uniform policy discussions, particularly when it comes to adapting to extreme weather conditions.

In light of the school’s notice, many parents are now expressing a desire for a reassessment of uniform regulations to prioritise student comfort in the summer months. As schools educate young minds, it’s essential that they also foster a climate where students feel comfortable, allowing them to focus on their studies rather than the discomfort of outdated uniform policies.

As the summer heat becomes more frequent due to climate change, schools across the country may need to take a close look at their uniform expectations. The importance of striking a balance between maintaining a professional appearance and ensuring students' comfort cannot be overstated. Many are left wondering if Mossley Hollins High School will heed these calls for change and consider more adaptable uniform policies that align with evolving societal needs.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1-4, 6
2. Paragraphs 5, 7
3. Paragraph 8
4. Paragraph 8
5. Paragraph 8
6. Paragraph 9
7. Paragraph 9

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/mum-slams-school-uniform-policy-31638439> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/schools-met-office-students-west-midlands-government-b1012584.html> - In July 2022, several UK schools relaxed uniform rules to help students cope with a heatwave. For instance, St John’s CE Middle School Academy in Bromsgrove allowed pupils to wear non-uniform clothing, including loose, light-coloured attire, to keep cool. Similarly, Clapton Girls’ Academy in East London adjusted schedules, sending students home early to avoid the hottest part of the day. These measures aimed to ensure student comfort and safety during extreme temperatures.
3. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/school-uniform-clothing-guidance-schools-education-authorities/pages/9/> - The Scottish Government provides guidance for schools on developing uniform policies that consider weather and seasonal suitability. Schools are encouraged to adopt flexible policies that allow for items like shorts, leggings, hoodies, or jumpers, promoting comfort and practicality. The guidance emphasizes the importance of inclusivity, affordability, and adaptability to different weather conditions, ensuring students are appropriately dressed throughout the year.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform/school-uniforms> - The UK Department for Education outlines requirements for governing boards when developing school uniform policies. It emphasizes the need for policies to be affordable, inclusive, and considerate of students' comfort. The guidance suggests engaging with parents and pupils, considering the impact on different groups, and being flexible during extreme weather conditions, such as allowing shorts in hot weather or trousers in cold weather.
5. <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/20270512.north-east-schools-relax-uniform-policy-summer-temperatures-soar/> - In July 2022, several schools in the North East of England relaxed their uniform policies due to soaring summer temperatures. Schools like Bishop Barrington in Bishop Auckland and Stokesley School allowed students to wear PE kits or relaxed uniform items to ensure comfort during the heatwave. These adjustments aimed to prioritize student well-being and adapt to the extreme weather conditions.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2023-06-10/uk-heatwave-schools-should-be-flexible-on-uniform-rules-to-keep-children-cool> - In June 2023, Hampshire County Council urged schools to be flexible with uniform rules during a heatwave to help children stay cool. The council recommended that schools consider relaxing uniform policies, adjusting outdoor activities, and ensuring classrooms are well-ventilated. These measures aimed to prioritize student comfort and safety during extreme temperatures.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-suffolk-66088496> - In July 2023, Farlingaye High School in Woodbridge, Suffolk, announced a review of its uniform policy after a student wore a skirt to protest the school's no-shorts dress code during hot weather. The school acknowledged the need for flexibility and planned to monitor weather forecasts, making adjustments to the uniform policy in the event of extreme heat.