

# Why school uniform retailers offer the best value for branded PE kit

Specialist schoolwear retailers provide parents and pupils with cost-effective, high-quality school specific PE kits that meet all school requirements. Recent benchmarking shows these retailers offer the most competitive pricing, year-round availability, and other benefits that mainstream retailers (including Sports Direct and supermarkets) cannot match. If a cap were to be applied to school-specific uniform items, independent research shows that school leaders will remove school specific PE kit before other uniform items, pushing parents toward more expensive sportswear brands and increasing social pressure on students to conform to the latest fashion trends.

## Primary School PE Kit Pricing and Availability

Specialist school retailers are the only ones that stock a full range of PE kit items for primary schools. When compared to mainstream sports retailers:

### . 21% cheaper

Specialist school retailers are, on average, **21% cheaper** than PE kit items from leading sportswear brands.

### . 32% cheaper

Looking at the cheapest available items, specialist school retailers are **32% cheaper** than leading sportswear brands.

In addition, specialist schoolwear retailers ensure **year-round availability in a wider range of sizes**, providing flexibility for parents to buy or replace items.

Supermarkets do not stock the full range of PE kit items for primary schools.

**“[School-specific branded PE Kit] makes sure nobody is stigmatised or stands out from not having the latest item or the most branded schoolwear.”**

Alex Hughes, Principal,  
Ninestiles Academy, Birmingham

## Sports T Shirt – Average Costs

Specialist Schoolwear  
Retail Price



Leading sportswear  
brand



Supermarket



## Secondary School PE Kit Pricing and Availability

For secondary schools, Sports Direct is the only mainstream retailer offering an alternative to specialist schoolwear retailers, but their selection is severely limited in terms of colours and product options.

All Sports Direct options are leading sportswear brands, adding cost and inconsistency.

Senior school price benchmarking:

### • **44% cheaper**

Specialist school retailers offer PE kit items for secondary schools that are, on average, **44% cheaper** than leading sportswear brand alternatives.

### • **74% cheaper**

When comparing with the cheapest available sportswear brand alternatives, specialist school retailers are **74% cheaper**.

- Supermarkets and high street retailers do not stock all PE kit items required by secondary schools. Where items are available, specialist schoolwear retailers are:
  - **21% cheaper** than high street retailers.
  - **1% cheaper** than supermarkets.

## Promoting Participation and Wellbeing



Specialist school-branded uniform options **reduce anxiety and social pressure among students** and eliminates the pressure of having the latest sports fashion brand.



**Multiple colourways** allow school teams to play without needing extra shirts or bibs.



**Uniformity fosters inclusivity** and promotes school identity.



This **supports increased participation in PE** and aligns with the Children's Wellbeing Bill, enhancing student wellbeing in the UK.

If there were to be further restrictions on school-specific branded uniform, sports kit would be the most likely to be removed, with **over 50% of schools indicating items like sports leggings and base layers would be among the first to go.**

Survey of 272 school leaders,  
July 2024