



## Governors' Statement regarding Uniform

The governors of Belper School have recently revisited the issue of introducing a uniform. This follows continued and ongoing queries relating to the current dress code and an earlier commitment in 2015/16 to revisit this issue. The governors acknowledge the questions raised by prospective parents and others who have an interest in the school.

As agreed the governors have reviewed the school dress policy this year. We have considered the main areas raised by parents, students, staff and other members of the community.

The governors have concluded that we will retain the current dress code and a school uniform will not be introduced. There are no plans to revisit this decision for the foreseeable future.

We understand that not having a uniform can be regarded as unconventional; however, governors regard the non- uniform approach as integral to the ethos and values of Belper School.

- **School ethos-** At its core, Belper School has an ethos that is built on respect, inclusivity and responsibility, nurturing students to be individuals within a family approach. OFSTED indicate that 'Students interact well, contributing to a supportive and happy environment in which they learn and develop as responsible young people.' On balance governors believe that students should determine their own identity through their dress. This better reflects our ethos than the imposition of a strictly enforced uniform.
- **Achievement** - Almost 70% of students have consistently achieved pass grades in GCSE key measures for English and Maths in the last few years. OFSTED report 'Students achieve well throughout the school and make good progress'. Uniforms are not worn in most European countries and in the USA. There is no compelling evidence to suggest that uniforms result in better educational outcomes. Schools that require students to wear uniforms find that young people will attempt 'adaptations' to the uniform requirements which results in a disproportionate amount of teaching time being lost to sanctions relating to uniform violations
- **Discipline and behaviour-** Belper School has clear expectations about the behaviour of students. There is a clear and transparent system in school with regard to enforcing expectations and sanctions that are applied. The most recent OFSTED inspection (Sept 2014) reported that 'Student behaviour is good'. We have seen no evidence to suggest the introduction of a uniform is required to improve discipline and behaviour.

- **Bullying and equality-** Belper has a strong record on managing bullying, with a zero tolerance policy. Pressures to wear certain labels arise not from the non- uniform policy but from the attitudes and views of a student's wider environmental influences. Young people will pick out differences whatever clothing is worn and students will seek to differentiate and individualise themselves regardless of whether they wear a uniform. The governors conclude that bullying is prevented and reduced by the attitude, expectations and ethos of a school, not by making students all wear the same clothes.
- **Relationships** - Staff indicate to governors that introducing a uniform would alter the relationship they have with students. Evidence from other schools suggest that time spent enforcing uniform breaches is lost time that could be spent on teaching and learning and contributing to the positive relationships within school. Governors believe that introducing a uniform would be detrimental to this aspect of the school.
- **Pride in the school** - There is a proud history of the school contributing via school events and activities out of school to enrich the lives of others. Parents and members of the community have commented how articulate, inspiring and well behaved the students are and how impressed they are with the school overall. Governors believe that students do not need to wear a uniform to feel part of and proud of their school; this is borne out by how our previous and current students represent the school in the wider community.
- **Community Image-** Belper School students are required to abide by the school dress code. We understand that a uniform could provide a more recognisable image of Belper School students on their way to and from school. Being a non-uniform school is something that differentiates Belper School, and reinforces its student focussed ethos; the governors conclude that this outweighs any advantage of a uniform.