



28 January 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

### Re: Change to School Skirt

I am writing to inform you about the introduction of a new school skirt from **September 2020** for our new year 7s - and any other students who would like one; this will become compulsory in **September 2021** for all other years. We will not be restocking the old style skirt so these will only be available while current stocks last. Year 11 in their final year in 2021-2022 will be exempt and still able to wear the old style skirt, rather than purchase a new one, providing it fits and reaches the knee.

The decision to replace our current skirt has been made following feedback from parents and students. The school skirt was changed to a single supplier some years ago in order to provide consistency across the school while maintaining value for money. Issues identified, however, are outlined below:

- Complaints from parents – waist sizes do not come in different lengths especially for slim, tall students; students roll them up, especially outside of school.
- Complaints from staff – students roll them up and have to be challenged regularly. They can be revealing, especially when walking upstairs.
- Complaints from students – unflattering style; often too big in the waist and therefore come up short.

We have therefore spent the last 12 months looking at various styles with our supplier Simmonds, from bespoke tartan to 'off the peg' styles. We have also gathered quotes from elsewhere while being mindful that Simmonds provides a good service, value for money and an on-site, staffed uniform shop. We took various options to School Governors, Backchat student representatives and parents via FOBS and, after overwhelmingly positive feedback, the decision was as follows.

### The new school skirt:



Headteacher Mr Ahson Mohammed, B.Ed (Hons)

Deputy Headteachers: Mrs Shirley Smears, B.Ed (Hons), Mr Patrick Berry, BA (Hons)

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A modern, black kilt style with yellow piping on waistband available from Simmonds, only.

**Advantages:**

1. The new skirt is made to order and unique to Billericay. It will provide a much smarter and more consistent look for the students. The current box pleated skirt is a mass produced, generic school skirt, used by other schools and has limitations regarding fit and length.
2. Stitched down pleats on the new skirt style ensure a more flattering fit. The stitching also reinforces the pleats and the permanent look of the pleats. (The pleats on the current skirt can be pulled out if the waist is over extended.)
3. The improved size range on the new skirt style will include approximately twelve waist sizes, which come in one or two lengths. This is likely to mean around eighteen size variations on this skirt. The current skirt has six sizes which are dual sizes 9/10, 11/12, 13/14 and so on. This means the new skirt is a better fit for students. The current skirt gets marginally longer as the sizes increase but it is only available in one length per size which can be problematic for many, including taller students, slim in the waist.
4. The internal elastic waist adjuster on the new skirt is an added feature allowing skirts to be purchased slightly bigger for growth, whilst still flattering in fit. The modern kilt style has two buttons which can be moved to make the skirt larger or smaller therefore improving the fit and allowing it to be worn for longer. The new skirt also has a spare button. It has a greater longevity than our current skirt because it can be adjusted.
5. The fabric for both the new and existing skirt is 100% polyester. It is therefore easy to launder, quick drying, colourfast and virtually non-iron. Like our current skirt, it should not be tumble dried.
6. The starting price of the new skirt is £19.95 and can also be made to order. Compared to the cheaper current skirt, the new skirt is arguably better value for money as it will last longer. It is also considerably cheaper than alternative kilt styles or skirts at other secondary schools. At the June selling event the skirt will be discounted by 10%.

Unlike other secondary schools, the only uniform items which must be bought from our supplier Simmonds are: the tie, school skirt (which is not compulsory; students have the option to wear tailored trousers), rugby top and blazer badge. All other items can be sourced at a range of retail outlets, in order to maintain choice for parents.

I hope this explains our decision and the timeframe for the new skirt's introduction. We are rightly proud of our students and have high expectations of what they achieve as well as how they behave. This extends to equally high standards of uniform.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Manchee, Student Services Manager or Mrs Berry, Assistant Headteacher, if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



Mr A Mohammed, B.Ed. (Hons)  
Headteacher