



An Bille Oideachais (Éidí Scoile Inacmhainne), 2022
Education (Affordable School Uniforms) Bill 2022

Meabhrán Miniúcháin
Explanatory Memorandum



AN BILLE OIDEACHAIS (ÉIDÍ SCOILE INACMHAINNE), 2022
EDUCATION (AFFORDABLE SCHOOL UNIFORMS) BILL 2022

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Purpose of the Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to place a statutory obligation on the Minister for Education to make regulations governing the implementation of an affordable school uniform policy in schools, that is, a school uniform policy that is mindful of the resultant costs on families.

Section 1 provides for the relevant definitions.

Section 2 places a statutory obligation on the Minister to, having consulted with relevant stakeholders, make regulations relating to the implementation by schools of an affordable uniform policy.

These regulations must deal with the following:

1. Schools must develop and implement an affordable uniform policy in consultation with parents and students.
2. This policy must be made available publicly and easily understood. It must state clearly whether each item on the school uniform list is optional or required.
3. Schools must ensure that parents can source all elements of the school uniform from a number of retailers.
4. Only school crests or badges that are iron-on or sew-on can be required as part of the school uniform.
5. Schools must keep required usage of branded items to a minimum.
6. Specific uniform items should be avoided wherever possible for students taking part in extracurricular activities in school such as sports or music groups, and efforts must be made to ensure that no pupil will be discouraged from participating in said extracurriculars due to the expense of additional uniform items.
7. Schools should facilitate the acquisition by parents of second-hand uniforms wherever possible, through second-hand uniform sales, swap shops or other means. There is an obligation on schools to inform parents where second-hand uniform items are available.
8. In order to allow uniform items to be passed down to siblings or younger classmates, schools must avoid frequent changes to uniform requirements.
9. A mindful and considerate approach should be taken by schools in enforcing their rules on school uniforms, where the reason

suspected for non-compliance is the financial hardship of a students and/or their family.

10. Schools must ensure full compliance with these regulations no later than one year after the Minister publishes same. The only exception to this is where a pre-existing contractual agreement was made with a uniform supplier prior to the coming into operation of this Act.
11. The Minister will request a report from the Ombudsman for Children's Office, evaluating the extent to which schools have complied with these regulations, and the efficacy of the regulations in reducing costs for families. The first report must be requested 18 months after the Minister publishes the regulations. The report must be submitted to the Minister 6 months after this request and every 12 months thereafter.

Section 3 provides for citation of the Act and details regarding commencement.

Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire TD, Sorca Clarke TD
Iúil, 2022.