**What's the point of school uniform?**

“A shirt, tie and blazer may not be the ingredients for my favourite outfit, says 15-year-old Chloe Spencer, but if I were given the choice, I wouldn't throw away the idea of school uniform. Wearing a uniform creates an identity for a school and is an important part of being a school student.”

Claire Howlette, an English teacher, agrees: "Uniforms give students a sense of belonging to a particular school and create an identity for the school in the community. My school is one of many that chose a more formal uniform –a shirt and blazer instead of a jumper and polo shirt. A number of students have complained about the change, but general opinion is that the jumpers and polo shirts were ‘childish’.”

A school uniform teaches students to dress smartly and take pride in their appearance. Howlette says: "Uniforms help students to prepare for when they leave school and may have to dress smartly or wear a uniform."

Some people believe that a school uniform can improve learning by reducing distraction, sharpening focus on schoolwork and making the classroom a more serious environment. Perhaps most importantly, a uniform means students don't have to worry about peer pressure when it comes to their clothes. When everyone is dressed the same, worrying about what you look like isn't so important. There is no competition about being dressed in the latest trend, which would put a great deal of financial pressure on students and parents. Potential bullies have one less target for their insults; it's hard to make fun of what someone is wearing when you're dressed exactly the same.

In America, where a majority of schools do not have a uniform, [about](http://www.makebeatsnotbeatdowns.org/facts_new.html) 160.000 children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation by other students. This might not be directly linked to what they're wearing, but having a uniform can be a safety net for many students who might otherwise suffer from bullying. A strict uniform gives the impression that rules are strict too.

Macy Vallance, a high school student, says: "I like uniforms because everyone is the same and no one can be left out by the way they are dressed. My uniform might not be what I would wear in my own time, but it gives me a sense of belonging, takes away the pressure of what to wear. School uniform isn't fashionable, but that's exactly why I think it should be here to stay."

by Christoper Thomond

Adapted from *The Guardian.com.*