



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the changes from September 2023?

The main school uniform requirements have not changed. The change is that students will be required to wear the full school uniform every day and change into PE kit for PE lessons.

The uniform requirements are outlined on the following page of the College website:
<https://www.exmouthcollege.devon.sch.uk/parents-and-students/parent/-/carer-quick-guide/uniform-and-personal-appearance>

The PE kit requirements are here: <https://www.exmouthcollege.devon.sch.uk/parents-and-students/parent/-/carer-quick-guide/pe-kit>

Following feedback, students are now allowed to wear plain black leggings for PE if they wish.

In addition, the equipment requirements (which haven't changed) for September 2023 are here: <https://www.exmouthcollege.devon.sch.uk/parents-and-students/parent/-/carer-quick-guide/classroom-equipment>

Why was the situation reviewed?

During Covid it became a requirement for schools not to use changing areas due to social distancing. As the risk reduced and restrictions were removed, the vast majority of Secondary schools returned to 'normal' (i.e., using changing rooms for PE) by September 2022. At ECC this was limited by the loss of PE changing rooms due to the building works, so we needed to continue the arrangement of students wearing PE kit for the whole day.

The completion of the Elizabeth Lee building means that we now have full and improved facilities for changing. As a result, the Senior Team reviewed the situation, taking into account a wide range of considerations in considering what was best for students as a whole. This included feedback from a wide range of other schools, and feedback from staff and students.

Why was the decision made to return to changing for PE?

Following the review, there were a number of important reasons for the decision to return to changing for PE:

- Uniform is the most visible symbol of our expectations and is a foundation of high standards, strong culture and good behaviour. It was clear from the review that there were a significant number of students not meeting the uniform standards, mostly in relation to PE kit (and especially with non-ECC branded items). This was leading to more 'conflict' between staff and students. This was not supporting the really positive relationships needed for a great learning environment and far too much staff time was being taken up on issues around PE kit standards, mostly in relation to PE kit, but it was also having an impact on the consistency of normal school uniform. This was distracting from our core purpose of giving our students the best possible learning and wider experience.
- Uniform is a very important 'leveller' for students – any variation can lead to judgements and peer pressure (with subsequent pressure on parents) and this was starting to be an issue with the variation in PE kit that was being worn.

- Wearing PE kit after a PE lesson (especially after more intense exercise, or in poor weather) doesn't promote good hygiene and doesn't support the best quality / most comfortable learning environment in remaining lessons that day.
- Part of education is about preparing for adulthood and managing the range of situations that students will encounter in later life. We want to support students being comfortable in this range of situations.
- From our engagement with other schools (locally and beyond), nearly all Secondary schools have returned to changing. All these schools reported that there had been very few, if any, issues with the return to changing for PE.

What changes are being made to support the change back to changing?

We have ensured small separate changing spaces have been created (adjacent to each changing room) for any students requiring a separate changing space or where reasonable adjustments have been agreed with the SEND team.

What other changes are being considered?

We know that changing for PE will mean a slightly reduced amount of time for the 'sport' itself. We are clear that maximising engagement in PE / sport is really important for young people, for both health and wellbeing and we are committed to increasing the amount of sporting and active opportunities available to students, both as part of the 'school day' and beyond it. This is particularly the case for Year 10 and 11, who currently receive less PE lesson time than Years 7-9. We are looking at ways to give these year groups more access to sport this year and in the future and look forward to discussing this more with students as part of our student engagement (see below).

How will the school take account of student views on aspects of uniform and PE kit?

We know and appreciate that most students would have preferred to remain in PE kit for the whole day on PE days. Whilst we understand this feels like a significant change for students, the school has a responsibility to take decisions that are in the overall best interests of our students.

However, we are very keen to engage more with students about their experience at ECC. We will be developing our Student Leadership within the College next year, building on the work of the existing Student Council who meet fortnightly with Mr Wright. This will include hearing students' views on uniform, PE kit and sport, and how we evolve these in the future – this will be an early priority for the first half term.

What would the school action be if students arrived in school in PE kit?

Should this happen, any student wearing PE kit will be seen upon entry to the College and parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible to bring in the required uniform. Social time will also be supervised on the first day for any students not wearing uniform where parents/carers have not been able to drop it to the college.