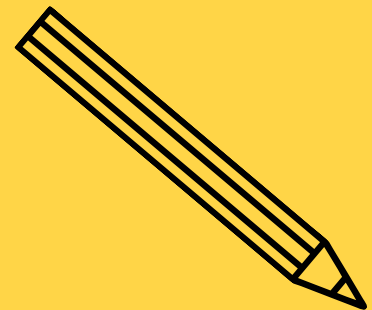
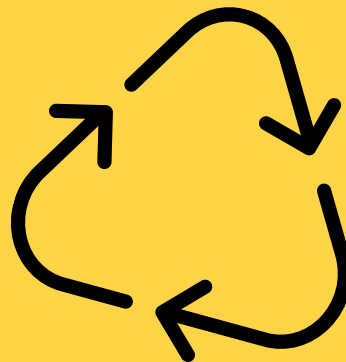
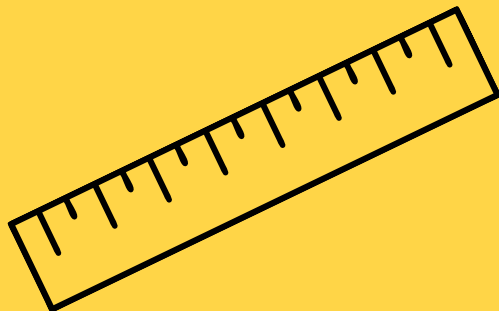


# SCHOOL UNIFORM RECYCLING TOOLKIT

'HOW TO GUIDE'







## INTRODUCTION

Buying school uniforms is a financial challenge for many families in Cornwall. With children constantly growing or sometimes changing schools, the next big expense is always around the corner.

Research carried out by The Children's Society in 2020 found that one in eight families made cutbacks to pay for their children's school uniform.

Along with this, the amount of school uniform that ends up in landfill is huge – much of which could be reused!

School uniform recycling projects are a fantastic way to reduce the financial burden on families whilst promoting the recycling and reuse of clothing.

The general idea is to centrally collect good condition school uniforms and associated items and re-distribute them.

This short guide will give you some top tips for developing a scheme with your local school or strengthening an existing scheme that you are currently running.



## 1: Share Your Thoughts

The first thing to do if you'd like to set up a scheme is to talk to other parents, friends, and groups connected with the school or local community.

If your school has a Parent Teacher Association or Friends Association (PTA) take your idea to them to see if they would like to help or if they already have a scheme in place.

The PTA may well invite you to develop the project alongside their work, and they will have existing relationships with parents and teachers!

Ask your school office/head teacher if they can help with the scheme - maybe they could promote the service, maybe they could help with storage?

Rather than taking on all the tasks it is useful to recruit a few people who are interested in helping. Get everyone together in one place to discuss who is good at what and how to make it happen.

You are now on your way to setting up your uniform recycling project!



## 2: Organisation and Management

Before you begin, you should meet with your group and discuss some of the practicalities of the project.

Consider issues such as what exactly you will be providing, when you will carry out your activities, and who will be the main point of contact for parents at the school.

Will it just be school uniform, or will it include PE kit? Will the clothes be free or require a small donation? What quality control will you have in place?

You should also think about how you will promote the scheme. It is always a good idea to use social media, posters, flyers and school newsletters.

Make use of the skills and talents available to you especially from those who have run similar projects.

Work with your school to ensure that any necessary policies and procedures are adhered to. It is likely that the school will already have processes in place for schemes like this!





### **3: Donation Points**

It's now time to think about how you will get donations of clothes! There are a number of ways you might receive clothing.

You may wish to hold a collection table outside the school on a certain day of the week/month where parents can hand in their unwanted school uniform. This works particularly well in the summer term!

You could also ask to place dedicated donation boxes in the school or in the local community such as in churches or village halls.

The school may also be able to provide items of uniform from lost property boxes at the end of each term.

You could ask the school and PTA to advertise these donation points/opportunities in their newsletters and on social media. Maybe there is a Facebook or WhatsApp group for parents where you can share the details?

Use your project group and any volunteers to arrange a rota for collecting donations/running the donation tables.



## 4: Cleaning and Processing

Ideally, donated clothes could be taken to one central location ready to be sorted.

Being strict about only keeping great quality uniforms really helps! As a general rule of thumb, ask yourself if your child would be happy to wear what you are recycling.

Where a damaged item can be repaired you may wish to do so, but the clothing should always retain the dignity to the child that wears it. Remember to recycle any items of clothing that can't be worn again!

You may decide to wash and/or donations ready to be distributed. Remember to remove any name tags!

You may wish to ask volunteers to take it in turns to do this in their homes, or organise trips to a local launderette.

It is a good idea to keep a list of the clothing you have so that you can respond to requests and put out specific appeals for clothing.



## 5: Distributing The Uniforms

Finally, the most important part, getting the uniforms to those who need them most. There are a number of ways in which you might choose to distribute the school uniforms.

For instance, if you are fortunate enough to have a large selection of clothes available you might invite parents to make requests for specific items of uniform in specific sizes.

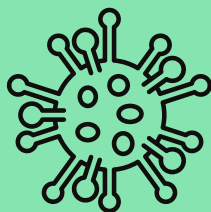
Requests could be taken over the phone, email, or social media and either delivered or collected.

You may choose a referral mechanism whereby families in need are referred to you by the school themselves.

Or, you might choose to hold drop in days at the school where parents and children can come and pick up items of clothing.

It is often a good idea to open your scheme widely and promote it to all families. This helps to reduce any stigma and also pushes the green credentials!





## 6: Coronavirus Considerations

We know how important it is to reduce clothing waste, but it's also important to keep your community and loved ones safe.

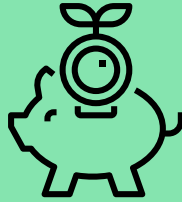
You and your team need to be aware of the impact of Coronavirus throughout your project. It is important that your activities do not provide an opportunity for Coronavirus to spread and that you are operating in the safest way possible.

We recommend that you and your team carry out and update a simple risk assessment.

You should always take the lead from your school when deciding how to proceed. If in doubt, it's always best to pause and seek further guidance.

You should always check and comply with the latest government guidelines which can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)



## 7: Supporting Your Scheme and Community

Setting up a school uniform recycling project won't cost the earth, but you might still run into some expenses along the way.

Groups wishing to develop or strengthen a school uniform recycling scheme can apply to the Cornwall Independent Poverty Forum for a grant of up to £70. These funds are being generously provided by the Cornwall Community Foundation.

The grant can be spent on items to help run the scheme, e.g., boxes, posters, hanging rails, and covid compliance materials.

*To apply please email: [info@cornwallindependentpovertyforum.com](mailto:info@cornwallindependentpovertyforum.com) stating:*

- Where your scheme will run.
- What partners are supporting your scheme (we ask that one of these must be a local school).
- How you intend to use the grant.
- How much you are applying for.



**Cornwall  
Community  
Foundation**





## **You're up and running!**

We hope this 'how-to-guide' has proved useful and inspired you to develop your own school uniform recycling scheme.

This toolkit is a collaboration between Cornwall Independent Poverty Forum, Transformation Cornwall, and Volunteer Cornwall.

We're sharing this guide in good-faith but you should always work in partnership with your local school and seek their advice.

Remember, you can really make a difference!

**TRANSFORMATION  
CORNWALL<sup>+</sup>**



 **Volunteer  
Cornwall**

April 2021