



I hope you have had a relaxing Easter break, as we look ahead to the summer term and Back to School just 3 months away, I wanted to provide an update on our progress towards Back to School and our plans for the season. I have also included a brief on a Parliamentary Private Members Bill regarding the costs of school uniform.

Re-opening of Non-Essential Retail

12th April will mark the re-opening of non-essential retail, which will include our retail store in Elvington. Last year we introduced an appointment system, this turned out to be very successful and was strongly favoured by customers who made appointments last summer.

We will be continuing with an appointment system from 12th April and visitors can book online from our website. We have a new system in operation which will allow customers the opportunity to cancel or amend their appointment within 6 hours of the appointment time, customers will also receive a text notification of their booked appointment.

When you next communicate with parents could you please remind them that they need to book an appointment to visit our store.

Click & Collect orders

As you would expect, Click & Collect has been a very popular option for parents in the last few weeks and months. We have invested in this aspect of our service to make it easier for parents to identify where they need to go when they visit our store. From late July to early September we are planning to offer the service between 8am & 8pm, Monday to Saturday.

Back to School Stock

Back in November last year we confirmed all our forward orders with our supply base. Given the experience of last year and the delays that Covid-19 had on some of our supplies, we wanted to ensure goods arrived earlier than normal so that as the season approached, we could concentrate on the business of getting orders out to customers.

Goods have started to arrive into our warehouse, earlier than expected which is excellent news. The recent problem in the Suez Canal has slightly impacted some goods so there will be a minor delay on some goods which are currently on the water, but these goods will still arrive by Mid May.

In all we expect to be in a very strong position by the end of the summer term, we have invested in more decorated stock than any previous year which should significantly ease pressure on our in-house embroidery department and speed up delivery of orders, particularly later in the summer holidays but we hope parents will plan ahead and order early.

Cut-Off Date for Guaranteed Delivery

The cut-off date for guaranteed delivery will once again be 29th July, if we have parents' online orders by midnight on Thursday 29th July 2021, we guarantee to deliver their order before schools start in September.

Leavers Hoodies

We are taking orders now for Leavers Hoodies, if you are planning to order Leavers Hoodies for your leavers then please contact us for more details, ideally we would like to have all orders placed before the next half term break.

Education (Guidance about the Costs of School Uniform) Bill

You may be aware that for the past 12 months a Private Members Bill has been passing through Parliament which aims to address the costs of school uniform.

This Bill introduced by Labour MP Mike Amesbury and backed by The Children's Society is supported by the Government but only on the understanding that the Conservative Party could write the Bill. It has now had its 3rd reading in The Commons and The Lords and is expected to pass in the coming weeks/months.

The result of this process is that the current DfE guidelines on the setting of a uniform policy will become law and schools will have to ensure they follow this guidance when setting a uniform policy.

In reality most schools will not need to change anything and in the case of Primary Schools who allow pupils to wear plain or badged items you will likely have to change very little if anything, but I am sure this will be discussed with Governors nearer the time.

Nothing will change immediately and it is likely to be Back to School 2022 when any changes will take effect and later in the year The DfE will likely issue more information about how this Bill will impact how schools deal with the issue of uniform.

One change that will likely impact will be sole supplier arrangements and it is expected that schools who wish to appoint a sole supplier for supply of their uniform, will need to demonstrate that they have undertaken some form of tender exercise at least every 5 years. Any contracts in force at the time The Bill comes into law (assuming it does) will be recognised as being compliant with the new law.

If any school wishes to place our arrangement on a more formal footing ahead of The Bill passing into law, then please contact me to discuss this process. I have attached some information issued by The Schoolwear Association regarding this Bill.

Some of you may be aware that for almost 6 years I have served on the Executive Committee of The Schoolwear Association. As a body we have worked incredibly hard to ensure this Bill and its potential impact was properly understood by MP's and Government Officials, etc.

My colleagues on The SA Exec have held numerous meeting with MP's and we maintain extremely close links with The DfE and have provided a great deal of support during this process, including producing a sample tender document which we hope The DfE will adopt as the standard vehicle for schools to use to tender for services.

If any school wishes to discuss any aspect of this Bill or would like to receive additional information then please contact me and I will be very happy to assist.

Peter

Peter Dalton

SCHOOLSHOP

