

MID ULSTER *School Uniform Recycling* **TOOLKIT**

.....
**A Practical Support Guide for a
School Uniform Recycling Initiative**
.....

**WHY
CHOOSE
TO
REUSE?**

**PLANNING
YOUR
INITIATIVE**

**HINTS
&
TIPS**

**WHAT
NEXT?**

Includes a suite of
adaptable flyers,
checklist templates
and evaluation tools





CONTENTS

TOOLKIT ITEM	PAGE
Acknowledgements & How to use the Toolkit	<u>PAGE 2</u>
Background to the Toolkit	<u>PAGE 3</u>
Evidence: Why run a School Uniform Recycling Initiative?	<u>PAGE 4</u>
Who can run a School Uniform Recycling Initiative?	<u>PAGES 5 & 6</u>
Points for Discussion (Including Checklist)	<u>PAGES 7 - 12</u>
Evaluations and What Next?	<u>PAGE 13</u>
Templates to Use	<u>PAGE 14 - 18</u>
Further Information and Resources	<u>PAGE 19</u>
Timeline for Running an Event	<u>PAGE 20</u>
Eco Schools	<u>PAGE 21</u>
Volunteering	<u>PAGE 22</u>



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to members of both the Dungannon and Mid Ulster Locality Planning Groups (LPGs): local partnerships working towards improving outcomes for children, young people and families across Northern Ireland. Participating organisations are included at the end of the document.

Thanks to the PTA of Magherafelt High School for their support and feedback on the Toolkit and to those participating schools in the Mid Ulster area.

Thanks also to the authors/owners of the various resources and further reading we have included throughout the Toolkit.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

This Toolkit has been produced as a practical resource for schools in running a School Uniform Recycling Initiative. This includes handy tips, suggested structures for discussion, templates to adapt and use, and links to further reading and resources.

You can print out the Options ([Page 6](#)) and Checklist ([Pages 8-12](#)) and use as discussion prompts, completing the boxes and keep as a record of discussion. You may wish to increase the copies to A3 size or copy the tables onto a flipchart page. The Discussion notes at the bottom of the Checklist sections lets you add any further notes of your discussion.

For the templates shown on [Page 15](#) and [Page 16](#) you are able to amend details where relevant to advertise your initiative/event. This includes adding your school logo, name and details of your initiative. These can be done in the indicated areas in brackets.

On the Inventory ([Template 5](#)) which accompanies this resource, you can add any details in the relevant headings in the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

All words or phrases which are in grey and underlined can be clicked on to take you to the relevant resource, further reading or e-mail. We have also included a link for further resources which is on [Page 19](#). This includes many articles and evaluations of other School Uniform Recycling Initiatives.

The Timeline on [Page 20](#) can be printed/used as a reference guide for all involved.

For any clarification or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at localityplanning@ci-ni.org.uk

**WE'VE DRAWN UP A LIST
OF OUR TOP TIPS!
(LOOK OUT FOR THESE
AS YOU READ THROUGH
THE TOOLKIT)**



BACKGROUND TO THE TOOLKIT

This Toolkit has been produced in partnership by member organisations and services of both the Dungannon and Mid Ulster Locality Planning Groups (LPG's). Members of both LPG's identified poverty as a critical factor which can adversely affect families which has been further exacerbated by the impact of Brexit and Covid-19 pandemic in recent years. It was agreed to produce a practical toolkit to support schools in the running of a School Uniform Recycling Initiative.

Locality Planning Groups are partnerships between statutory, voluntary and community organisations working with and for children, young people and families at a local level. Their work focuses on early intervention to improve outcomes for children and young people. They are one of the functions of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) operating across Northern Ireland.

School Uniform Recycling Initiatives have taken place across Northern Ireland involving schools, voluntary and community sector bodies. The partners of Mid Ulster and Dungannon LPGs agreed to combine to produce a Toolkit aimed at Primary and Post Primary schools in the Mid Ulster Council area, to help them organise and run an initiative which best suits their circumstances and resources.



**LINK UP WITH OTHER LOCAL
SERVICES OR PARTNERS
(E.G. CHURCHES AND YOUTH
CLUBS) TO AGREE ON SUITABLE
VENUES, STORAGE OF ITEMS, ETC.**

In late 2021, contact was made to all schools in the area via a Survey Monkey link, asking whether they already run a School Uniform Recycling Initiative and happy to share their experiences or did not but would like to find out more. 20 schools responded with the following breakdown of replies:

- 8 schools already ran a school uniform recycling initiative, 8 did not
- 5 schools running a school uniform recycling initiative were agreeable to sharing their learning with us
- 13 schools were interested in finding out more with the view to running an initiative in Spring/Summer 2022

This Toolkit aims to provide practical support to schools in the Mid Ulster Council area, in setting up and running a School Uniform Recycling Initiative which is sustainable and responsive to individual need.



EVIDENCE: WHY RUN A SCHOOL UNIFORM RECYCLING INITIATIVE?

Across the UK, including Northern Ireland, we throw away 1,000,000 tonnes of textile waste each year with 300,000 tonnes ending up in Landfill. We buy more clothes than any EU country and have 5 times more clothes than our grandparents.

In the UK each year, every student creates 7kg of school uniform waste. In 2020-21 there were 30,352 pupils (primary and post primary schools) creating a total of 212.464 tonnes of uniform waste in Mid Ulster, the majority of which going to landfill.

Research in Northern Ireland by the Parents Engagement Group states the average cost of a Primary School uniform is £173 and post primary £378. The average **spend** for primary school pupils is £315 and £337 for post primary. School uniform grants for families in Northern Ireland are greatly lower than that of their UK and Republic of Ireland neighbours, currently £35.73 for a Primary school pupil and £73-£78 per post primary pupil.



**CONSIDER RUNNING A
SWAP SHOP
(BRING AN ITEM, TAKE AN ITEM...)**

Compilers of this Toolkit recognise the sensitive political implications currently existing around school uniform affordability and the debates held at a higher policy level, however, wish to assert that the toolkit aims to be a practical local solution focusing primarily on the environmental benefits while helping to ease the financial burden brought about by purchasing of school uniforms for all children.



WHO CAN RUN A SCHOOL UNIFORM RECYCLING INITIATIVE?

Anyone can run a School Uniform Recycling Initiative. Activities have been co-ordinated and run by Schools, Community Groups and Associations, Churches, Food Banks and Local Partnerships like the CYPSP, consisting of key local organisation aiming to provide family support.

For the purpose of this Toolkit, we are focusing on schools in the Mid Ulster District Council area.

If you are considering running a School Uniform Recycling Initiative for your school, chat with parents, teachers and students from your school community to establish if others would like to become involved. Bring your idea to the school and PTA's attention that this is something the school community would be interested in. If this is something the school or PTA is not interested in, perhaps a local community group may take on the task with help and support.



**ENCOURAGE THE
INVOLVEMENT OF FAMILY
MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO
HELP SUPPORT THE RECYCLING
ELEMENT**

We strongly recommend engaging with pupils of the school to become involved from the beginning, to create a collective approach with ownership spread across the school. The Student/School Council, Lower Sixth Students or Eco-Committee would be a natural starting point in this respect.

We have included further information about Eco-Schools and volunteering recognition on pages 21 and 22.



**LOOK AT THE BENEFITS FOR
STUDENTS WHO VOLUNTEER TO
TAKE PART**

To summarise, we have pulled together some options, to help you think about the best approach for your school. (A template is provided on the next page, with these options included, to print out and use as a discussion tool to weigh up the pros and cons to help decide what is best for your school.)

School Uniform Recycling OPTIONS

WHO CAN RUN THE INITIATIVE?	Pros	Cons	DECISION
Run by School Staff			
Run by Students (School Council / Eco Committee)			
Run by PTA			
Run by Community Organisation			
Joint Co-Ordination (Identify who)			
Other (Please share this model with us)			

DISCUSSION NOTES:

☐
☐
☐

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

As stated, we are not aiming to provide a prescriptive model to be adhered to - flexibility is key.

This section provides a key Checklist for you to have discussions with teaching staff, parents, students and any other partners with whom you will be working. These will then help to produce a clear action plan.

**SPEAK TO LOCAL BUSINESSES
TO SEE IF THEY HAVE ANY
SPARE COAT HANGERS AND
RAILS TO HANG THE
UNIFORMS ON**

(See the following four pages for a printable version of the Checklist.)

**ASK FOR DONATIONS TO BE
IN GOOD/EXCELLENT
CONDITION, WASHED AND
IRONED**

N.B. If this event is run by the school's Eco Schools Council, the initiative can contribute towards achieving Green Flag Award status. To find out more, click [HERE](#).

If this event is run by students, the initiative can contribute towards achieving volunteering hours.

Visit Pages [21](#) and [22](#) to read more about Eco Schools and Volunteering.



School Uniform Recycling CHECKLIST



WHAT ITEMS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE INITIATIVE?

- ☐ Blazers
- ☐ Coats
- ☐ Ties
- ☐ Trousers
- ☐ Skirts
- ☐ Shirts
- ☐ Scarves
- ☐ PE Kits
- ☐ Stationary
- ☐ School Bags
- ☐ Sports Equipment
- ☐ Other

Bear in mind about initials/names on property.
How can this be addressed?

(We have included a spreadsheet as an attachment for you to use to catalogue and document all items of school uniforms and equipment so you can take stock of incoming and outgoing items)

DISCUSSION NOTES:

☐	
☐	
☐	



School Uniform Recycling CHECKLIST



WHERE WILL ITEMS BE STORED?

Is there a room at school to store the items?

Can they be held over for a short time only or all year round?

Think about alternative spaces - youth clubs, church halls, etc.

Are there any links, through e.g. the PTA or local businesses, to assist?



QUALITY CONTROL

What will you accept or not accept and who makes this decision?

Do you have the facility to have items dry-cleaned?

Items donated already clean (freshly washed / dried / ironed) and in good condition - recommended

DISCUSSION NOTES:

☐	
☐	
☐	



School Uniform Recycling CHECKLIST



HOW WILL YOU NOTIFY PARENTS TO DONATE ITEMS?

Do you have a school app/text/message/e-mail system to cover all parents?

Do you have a social media platform to advertise?

Do you have any links with community groups or local media?



WHAT WILL YOUR INITIATIVE LOOK LIKE?

Some options to consider:

- Agreed day(s) to hold event at an appropriate location
- After school day finishes
- Project for students
- Linking in with other community events (e.g. family days) to have a stall
- Holding an online event where parents can contact for specific items
- Open Day - obtain uniforms prior to summer holiday
- Other (Please let us know of any other ideas)

DISCUSSION NOTES:

☐	
☐	
☐	

School Uniform Recycling CHECKLIST



WHO CAN HELP AND HOW BEST TO USE THEIR TALENTS?

Who can help with publicity?

Who can help with the collection (sorting and documenting/cataloguing) the items?

Who can help with the days of the events?

Who can provide any added value (local community groups/activities to attend on the day/s)?

Who can help with an online initiative?



WHEN WILL YOU HOLD THE INITIATIVE?

On specific days before/during/end of summer?

How long will this last for?

Are there arrangements for anyone unable to attend but interested in obtaining items?

Working with community organisations for summer provision – collection point built through partnerships

DISCUSSION NOTES:

☐	
☐	
☐	

School Uniform Recycling CHECKLIST



WILL THERE BE A COST TO ITEMS?

Will all items be free?

Will there be a nominal fee?

(If so, what is best to do with takings/donations?)

Give examples - Blazer £5, Items £1?

Could you request an anonymous donation?



HOW CAN YOU BEST PUBLICISE THE SCHEME?

Education Authority Portal

Parish bulletins, newsletters, local media

Messaging parents, social media or local links

Toy Box, Sure Starts, Early Years

Foodbanks

DISCUSSION NOTES:

☐	
☐	
☐	

EVALUATIONS AND WHAT NEXT?

EVALUATION

We are keen to ensure any School Uniform Recycling Initiative is evaluated to measure its impact. This should include quantifiable measures such as the number of uniforms donated, distributed and the number of families benefitting. Costings can be calculated by attributing values to each item in order to demonstrate the savings made as compared to full price uniforms.

We have provided evaluation templates for both parents and schools to complete in order to gain as much information as possible. To accompany the quantitative data we will also ask for qualitative information to understand how the initiative has impacted on families.

Please complete the templates as instructed and send through to us at localityplanning@ci-ni.org.uk so we can add these to an evaluation report.

FUTURE STEPS

There will likely be a surplus of items that have not been recycled so discussion and agreement should be made to identify where these will go. Ideas might include:

- Keeping at a storage space in school so parents can contact at any time to enquire
- Keep at school for the following year's scheme
- Donate to local charity shops for selling on
- Many schools also sign up to the **Cash for Clobber** initiative each year (<http://www.cookstowntextilerecyclers.com/cash-for-clobber>) which is facilitated by Cookstown Textile Recyclers in conjunction with Eco Schools - This teaches school children, community groups etc the environmental and social benefits of recycling textiles whilst also raising some valuable funds for themselves (A uniform exchange could perhaps be linked to this scheme with participants encouraged to do a clear out of their unwanted clothing whilst keeping items of school uniform separate for any exchange scheme in place)
- Please contact us if you have any other ideas

CONTACT US

If there is anything that you think has been missed from this School Uniform Recycling Toolkit, or if you have any related thoughts, please get in touch.

Contact Darren Curtis at localityplanning@ci-ni.org.uk



TEMPLATES TO USE

[TEMPLATE 1]

Who Will Run the Initiative?

[TEMPLATE 2]

Points for Discussion Checklist

[TEMPLATE 3]

Donation / Collection Flyer

[TEMPLATE 4]

Event Flyer

[TEMPLATE 5]

Inventory Spreadsheet

[TEMPLATE 6]

Parent/Carer Evaluation

[TEMPLATE 7]

School Evaluation

INSERT LOGO OR SCHOOL NAME
INTO THIS TEXT BOX

School Uniform Recycling Initiative

WE ARE NOW COLLECTING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:



Blazers



Coats



Ties



Trousers

Skirts

Shirts



Scarves



PE Kits



Stationary

School Bags



Sports

Equipment

For further info. contact: << NAME / TEL. / E-MAIL / FACEBOOK >>



<< DATE >>



<< TIME >>



<< VENUE >>

DONATE

Supported by:



Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership

www.cypsp.hscni.net

INSERT LOGO INTO
THIS TEXT BOX

<< SCHOOL NAME >>

INVITES YOU TO THEIR

School Uniform Recycling Initiative



<< DATE >>



<< TIME >>



<< VENUE >>

For further info. contact:

<< NAME >>

<< TEL. >>

<< E-MAIL >>

<< FACEBOOK >>



Supported by:



Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership

www.cypsp.hscni.net

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for taking part in this School Uniform Recycling Event. We would like to ask a couple of questions to get your feedback and thoughts on this initiative.

We are collecting information anonymously to use to produce a report on how effective School Uniform Recycling Initiatives are, so would be grateful if you could answer some questions and give to someone to collect and pass on to us.

**1. Did this event help you with school items for your child/children?
(Please circle)**

Yes A Little Not Much No

2. How many items did you receive today? ()

3. Has this School Uniform recycling event helped you save money or reduce costs for your family? (Please circle)

Yes, a lot Yes, a bit Not Really Definitely Not

4. Do you think a school uniform recycling event like this is a good idea?

Yes A Little No

5. Have you any ideas how to make a school uniform recycling event any better for next year?

Please give this completed form to the person responsible so we can collect information on the school's event.

Thank you!

Dear Participating School

Thank you for taking part in this School Uniform Recycling Event. We would like to ask a couple of questions to get your feedback.

We want to obtain as much information from families and schools to demonstrate how effective a school uniform recycling initiative can be.

Please complete and contact us at localityplanning@ci-ni.org.uk to arrange transfer of information.

1. **Name Of School:** _____
2. **Name and Role of person completing this form:** _____
3. **Contact e-mail:** _____
4. **Was the School Uniform Recycling Initiative worthwhile to you as a school? (Please circle)**
Yes, very much Yes, a little Somewhat Not Very Definitely Not
5. **Was the Toolkit useful to your school in helping to run an Initiative?**
Yes, very much Yes, a little Somewhat Not Very Definitely Not
6. **How many items were you able to recycle (Please give a rough estimate to all that apply):**
Blazers () Trousers () Shirts ()
Skirts () Jumpers () Ties ()
PE Tops () PE Bottoms () Sports Equipment ()
Coats () Stationary ()
Other (Please state what and how many) ()
7. **What worked well for you from this initiative?** _____

8. **What can be improved for next year?** _____

9. **Will you continue to run an initiative next year? (Please circle)**
Definitely Maybe/Not Sure No
10. **Any further comments about your Initiative or Toolkit?** _____

Thank you!

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

There is a lot of further reading and information that can be accessed online. We have highlighted our sources on [Page 4](#) (the section on 'Evidence') in grey and underlined so you can click on these to open for more information and evidence behind these figures. Throughout the document, all underlined text in grey takes you to the corresponding website or e-mail address.

We have also included a suite of further reading and information in relevant areas that can be accessed online and these can be visited by either scanning the QR code with your mobile phone or clicking on the area highlighted underneath the image of a mobile phone.

This is not the exhaustive list of all relevant information however gives a taste of what exists online for those who wish to learn more about this area of work



Alternatively, visit the School Uniform Recycling Initiative Resource Hub by clicking [HERE](#)

TIMELINE FOR RUNNING AN EVENT

COMMENCE DISCUSSIONS

Zoom meeting with Schools to
introduce Toolkit

School discusses and agrees
"Who will Run the Initiative?"

[Template 1]

BEGIN

School begins Publicity for Initiative

School releases flyer for
Donations / Collections

[Template 3]

School releases Event flyer

[Template 4]

School keeps a record of stock
using Inventory Spreadsheet

[Template 5]

w/c
18th
April

TOOLKIT

Toolkit complete

1st 2
Weeks in
May

3rd
Week in
May

AGREEMENT

School discusses and agrees on
"Points for Discussion" Checklist

[Template 2]

School agrees on starting date

1st
Week in
June

June
Onwards

FUTURE

Work towards agreed
actions and evaluate

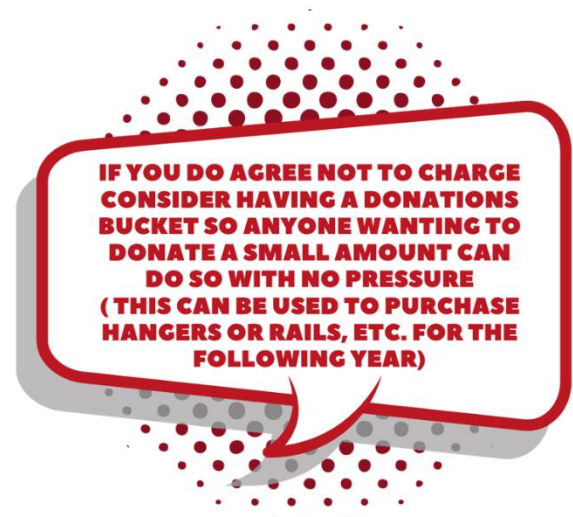
[Templates 6 & 7]



Engaging with pupils to become involved from the outset creates a collective approach with ownership spread across the school. The Student/School Council or Eco-Committee would be a natural starting point in this respect.

In Mid Ulster 100% of schools are registered on the Eco School programme with many having received at least one Green Flag award to date. By your schools Eco-Committee being involved in a School Uniform Recycling Initiative it creates a fantastic opportunity to get on board with recycling and waste reduction within your school. This can be documented as a great example of work around these topics when working towards or renewing your schools Green Flag award.

Mid Ulster District Council is fully committed to the Eco-Schools process and to supporting local schools in becoming Green Flag accredited schools within the Eco-Schools programme. To this end the Council Officers will offer assistance to local schools as they design and implement their Eco-schools action plans.



For more information contact one of the Mid Ulster Council Recycling Education Officers on 03000 132 132.



For students (e.g. Lower Sixth) there are opportunities to link involvement with a School Uniform Recycling Initiative to volunteering hours and awards recognised both locally and nationally. The two main volunteering bodies in the local area are Volunteer Now and the Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre.

Volunteer Now

This is the lead organisation for promoting and supporting volunteering across Northern Ireland, providing access to opportunities and encouraging people to volunteer. They are a resource for volunteer-involving organisations providing support on involving volunteers, governance and safeguarding.

Volunteer Now Impact Awards: “Young volunteers inspiring change”: Launched in June 2021, this programme has replaced the Millennium Volunteers programme and enables all young people across Northern Ireland to receive recognition for the hours that they complete through its online platform (powered by Be Collective).

Registration is on the Volunteer Now website (www.volunteernow.co.uk) which requires applicants to create a profile and join your volunteering organisation as well as the Volunteer Now Impact Awards group. A certificate is sent electronically upon completions of 50,100 and 200 hours of volunteering. This will appear in a social profile and will form part of a Social CV, ready for download, printing and saving. All volunteering history will be automatically inserted.

Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre

Based in Magherafelt and Cookstown, the Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre seeks to encourage social inclusion by working with the community to help further personal development through volunteering and/or training.

EPIC Awards: EPIC stands for Empowering People In Communities and is a free initiative to recognise and validate the contributions of volunteers in the community who make a commitment of at least 50 hours within any 12-month period.

There are three levels of EPIC Award:

Bronze Award - 50 hours

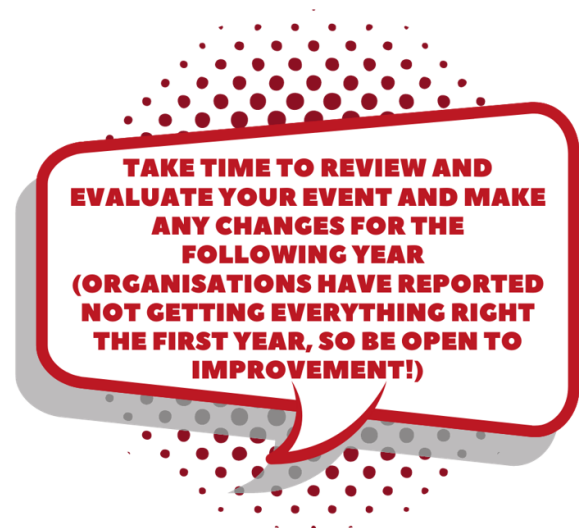
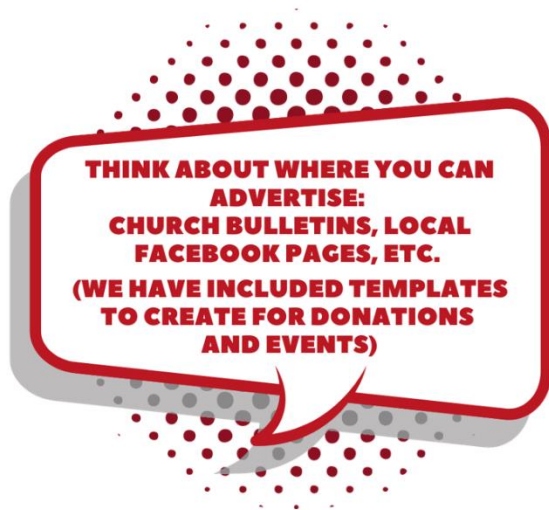
Silver Award - 100 hours

Gold Award - 200 hours

This can be gained through volunteering with one organisation or with multiple organisations simultaneously. On completion of relevant hours, volunteers receive a certificate (digital copy can be requested) of personal recognition for their contribution which can also be used as part of a CV, personal statement or job application. If volunteering hours are less than 50 hours a recognition certificate can be issued.

More information can be obtained at: www.midulstervolunteercentre.org





This Toolkit was designed and written by representatives of the Dungannon and Mid Ulster Locality Planning Groups.

Members of the Planning Group were Emma McGeehan (MUDC), Loraine Griffin (COSTA), Joanne Dougan (STEP), Nichola Simpson (Causeway & Mid Ulster Women's Aid) and Mary Tennyson (GOLD Sure Start, Cookstown).



For further information, contact Darren Curtis, Locality Development Officer in the Southern Area, or Emma McElhone, Locality Development Officer in the Mid Ulster Area:

darren@ci-ni.org.uk

Emma.McElhone@northerntrust.hscni.net

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