



Leigh Academy
RAINHAM

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Principal's Newsletter

November 2020

As an Academy we have been keen to develop a uniform for our pupils that is both unique to the area with a different colour scheme and style to the other local secondaries, and one that our pupils feel proud to wear. This week we shared some samples online of the uniform that we have been designing with our uniform provider, Brigade.

We have invested a lot of time talking to pupils of different secondary year groups, allowing a selection of them to try on the samples; the feedback and testimonials from pupils have been overwhelmingly positive. We have listened to their opinions regarding the uniform and made changes with Brigade accordingly, prior to finalising the design. Pupils have had particular input regarding the PE range on offer, alongside input from specialist PE teachers. This has enabled them to select which pieces of kit they would like to choose from and feel most comfortable wearing. We have included some of the pupil panel testimonials below:



"Having the choice of bag is great, I really like the satchel. I think it's stylish and grown up looking. This is the one I would pick having the choice"



"I love the blazer, the colours are different and I like that as it's not like other schools. It's clearly well made as it's so warm. The deep pockets are really useful and it is comfortable to wear. The style of it makes me feel really important and grown up, and it makes me feel proud of myself even though I am not at a grammar school!"



"I really like the black PE polo shirt and hooded jumper. The jumper is so soft inside and warm and the logo really stands out on the black. I would be very happy to wear that in my PE lessons!"

As a consequence of the support of pupils and Brigade, the final design of the Academy uniform consists of the grey braided blazer and tie to match one of the three college colours which have been selected from the Academy logo (teal, gold and burgundy). Brigade has vast experience in designing braided blazers for large federation academies in London and this is an increasingly popular design nationally, with some other Medway schools adopting this style. Pupils will remain in their college for their time at the Academy so their blazer colours will not change. We have already considered parental feedback regarding siblings being placed in the same college to ensure uniform can be handed down. Wearing a jumper will not be compulsory but should pupils wish to do so they will need to purchase the black v-neck jumper with the Academy logo from Brigade.



In addition, pupils will be expected to wear a knee length black pleated skirt or black trousers with black ankle socks/tights. The reason we have chosen black is to support parents financially as these can be bought anywhere without having to worry about matching them to a colour that may come in alternative shades, like navy and grey. This is to support families who may wish to look for more cost effective skirts and trousers elsewhere, though of course Brigade will provide reasonably priced high quality products which have proven to be longer lasting than supermarket brands. Where this part of our uniform is sourced will be parental choice but will need to comply with the uniform policy. Should you choose to buy all your items of uniform from Brigade, we can reassure you that their clothing is designed to withstand the daily rigours of school life and comes with a no quibble guarantee; offering free replacements should a product not last its life expectancy.



We recognise there has been concern from a very small minority of parents that a grey blazer may not be practical due to showing up dirt. Having worked at a number of academies, in my experience, and that of Brigade's, black blazers are often the worst colour for showing up marks, like brown mud and any flecks, due to the stark contrast, which is another reason we have opted for grey. At secondary schools pupils are not running around playing at break and lunch and, like any other secondary school, they would remove them if engaging in social sports or practical activities in lessons.



Schools and academies are asked by the Government to carefully consider the number of items of uniform that have logos on them, so that parents have the flexibility to consider alternative products that may be sourced cheaper elsewhere. We have taken this into careful consideration when designing our uniform and PE kit and for this reason the only logo pieces of PE kit are the black unisex polo shirt and black hoodie. Pupils would be required to wear black tracksuit bottoms, sports leggings (not normal leggings) or shorts and while these could be sourced elsewhere there will be a broad selection of suitable PE items, including rugby tops, trackpants and girl's skorts, available online through Brigade.



To mark how special our founding cohort of pupils are, we have designed a founding year tie which will be available for these pupils throughout their time at the Academy. Unlike the tie for the following year, this tie has the Academy logo on it as a memento for pupils to keep. In the following years pupils will have a smart striped college tie, again, both have received very positive feedback throughout the design period.



Lastly we have listened to pupil and parent feedback and will provide two styles of Academy bag that pupils can choose from. These will both be black with the Academy logo and consist of a rucksack and satchel style bag that will accommodate both A4 books and a chromebook.

We appreciate that when designing and selecting uniforms it is inevitable and unavoidable that people will have varying opinions due to personal choice and preferences of styles. We have sought the expertise of the team at Brigade who have been a trusted supplier of uniform to academies across the Trust since its formation. With over 30 years experience in the school wear industry, their input and guidance through this process has been invaluable. They will also host an evening event where they will work with parents to measure your children and ensure they are given the perfect fit prior to September.

While we will naturally have different opinions of what styles of uniform we personally prefer, I have no doubt we are united in agreement that the utmost priority for our children is that they receive highly effective teaching, a broad curriculum offer and to feel safe, supported, and content in their secondary setting.



Mrs A Millward
Principal, Leigh Academy Rainham

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