



March 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Change to Senior School Uniform Options, from September 2025

We are writing to announce a change to the girls' uniform options from September 2025. A new style of blazer mirroring the current design, culottes featuring a revised Ratcliffe plaid, and/or charcoal trousers, will be compulsory for all girls in Year 7 (the current Year 6) and available to all older girls in Years 8 to 11. The current Ratcliffe plaid kilt will be phased out by 2029.

We wrote to you in June 2024 to share a number of changes to our Appearance of Students Policy in response to student voice feedback. This included liberalising our rules on make-up in younger years and removing the 'hair up' rule to give girls free choice on whether to wear their hair up or down.

This term, our partners at Schoolblazer have worked closely with us to update and refresh the current uniform, seeking a natural evolution of our traditional style which we feel serves us well. We want our students to feel comfortable and confident in their uniform, and we believe that the changes we are making from September 2025 achieve this aim.

In the Spring and Summer terms of 2024, students shared their feedback with the College about their school uniform as part of a school uniform review. Led by an independent facilitator, student-voice groups gave their thoughts on the choice, colours, design, equity, and practicality of the uniform options available. They also offered us ideas about how we might change our uniform to better suit their needs whilst protecting a sense of belonging to their school. It was clear that for many of our students there is a clear link between being well-presented and their self-esteem.

Boys were happy with their uniform. Girls said they liked the design of our uniform, they appreciated the jumpers and not having to wear a tie, but they wanted greater equity with the option to wear trousers, for example. Girls were also undefended in sharing some of the challenges of our uniform: the problem of wearing a kilt on a windy day, in a practical subject, or simply, 'the pressure to roll' their kilt was a common theme.

Our uniform was last reviewed a decade ago, and so it is inevitable that fashions have moved on. Therefore, the impending redundancy of some of our items has also been an important consideration to us.



We are mindful of the cost of school uniform and the importance of the Parents' Association Uniform Shop for many families, especially in the current economic climate. Therefore, new items will either be the same cost or cheaper than the garment they directly replace, and the change to the uniform will be phased in between September 2025 and September 2029.

The information below details the proposed changes and the roll-out.

Yours sincerely,

James Rainer,

Deputy Head Pastoral

New Uniform Items

Schoolblazer have visited the College twice in recent months to lead fitting sessions with students and staff, allowing us to discern the feedback of girls, and narrow down our choices.

Blazer

Feedback about our blazer was mixed. Many like the design and most felt they wanted uniformity between the appearance of the boys' and girls' blazers. However, some felt strongly that the cut of the blazer was too boxy on the shoulders and that it felt old-fashioned. We considered different fits when Schoolblazer visited, but we have settled on a style which will maintain the crest on the lapel of the blazer whilst offering a more modern, tailored cut.

This blazer will retail at the same price or slightly cheaper than the existing blazer.



Culottes

We recognise the kilt can be impractical, that it billows on a windy day, and can lead to peer pressure for some. Retailing at £71, it is also a particularly expensive item.

Therefore, the kilt will be replaced by culottes. The culottes are designed using a new Ratcliffe plaid that is bespoke to the Senior School. Culottes are the favoured option of many other independent schools, and the fastest-growing garment provided by Schoolblazer. They offer a greater degree of comfort for girls, whilst maintaining the appearance of a skirt. Girls who tried on the culottes found them comfortable and more practical than the kilt, and gave detailed feedback about the length of culotte they feel most comfortable with. Therefore, our culottes will sit just above the knee.



These culottes are expected to retail at £50-£55.

Trousers

Girls were unanimous that they wanted an option to wear trousers to school. A number of different designs were considered, with thought been given to replicating the plaid of the culottes on the school trousers. However, parent voice felt strongly that trousers were a matter of equity between boys and girls, and that the College should replicate our expectations of boys trousers with the girls trousers. As a result, our girls trousers will also be charcoal grey.

The trousers will retail at approximately £29.

Phased roll-out of the new Ratcliffe College girls' uniform

Our aim for the introduction of our new uniform is fairness for families who have already committed to an independent school education, and, for existing parents, who have already purchased uniform with an expectation that it may last for more than one school year.

Existing Schoolblazer stock for girls will soon become redundant, and anyone purchasing uniform through Schoolblazer will only be able to purchase the new items.



We will phase the roll-out of the uniform with the following timeline:

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Year 7	New uniform to be worn in full by all.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.
Year 8	<i>Current Year 7</i> Students may choose to wear the new School uniform or continue wearing the existing uniform in part or full.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.
Year 9	<i>Current Year 8</i> Students may choose to wear the new School uniform or continue wearing the existing uniform in part or full.	Students may choose to wear the new School uniform or continue wearing the existing uniform in part or full.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Year 10	<i>Current Year 9</i> Students may choose to wear the new School uniform or continue wearing the existing uniform in part or full.	Students may choose to wear the new School uniform or continue wearing the existing uniform in part or full.	Students may choose to wear the new School uniform or continue wearing the existing uniform in part or full.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.
Year 11	<i>Current Year 10</i> Students may choose to wear the new School uniform or continue wearing the existing uniform in part or full.	Students may choose to wear the new School uniform or continue wearing the existing uniform in part or full.	Students may choose to wear the new School uniform or continue wearing the existing uniform in part or full.	Students may choose to wear the new School uniform or continue wearing the existing uniform in part or full.	New uniform to be worn in full by all.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will there be a chance to see the new uniform in person?

Schoolblazer are currently manufacturing sizing garments. Examples are available to view in the Senior School Reception.

Will girls wear tights or socks with culottes?

Other schools mandate tights, whilst others allow a choice between tights and socks. We are consulting with other schools who have made a similar change to their uniform and we will also work with the students to allow them to have their voice. This will be confirmed with the publication of an updated Appearance of Students policy no later than half-term in the Summer Term 2025.

Are any further changes planned?

Student voice is an ongoing process, and we always receive helpful advice from our representatives on the School Council. We work closely with our suppliers Schoolblazer and PlayerLayer to refine our offer.

When can I purchase items online?

The new uniform items will be available to purchase online from Schoolblazer, from June 2025. We will write to you nearer the time to confirm when items are live, and ready to order.

Can I still purchase items from the Parents' Association Second Hand Uniform Shop?

Yes. As the roll-out progresses, more items will become redundant but, inevitably, more of the new uniform will also become available in the shop. The design of the blazer has been carefully chosen so that it would not be too obvious if a child is wearing a 'new' or 'old' blazer.

How do I know what sizes to order?

You will still input your child's measurements into the Schoolblazer Intelligent Sizing System and they will indicate the recommended size on the shopping page. However, this is a suggestion based on the measurements you have entered. Should you wish to choose an alternative size, you can use the drop-down menu to select this.

If I am an existing Senior School parent, does my daughter need to buy new uniform?

- **Existing students:** No. The phased roll-out for existing students will allow them to wear their existing uniform until they enter the Sixth Form – please refer to the timeline overleaf.
- **New students:** Yes. All new students to the Senior School are required to wear the new uniform – please refer to the timeline overleaf.

If I am an existing Senior School parent, can my daughter wear the new uniform?

Yes. We expect many parents to make the decision to transition their child to culottes or trousers based on the comfort and practicalities of these options. We expect some girls to prefer the style of the new blazer, too.

If you have any questions, please e-mail jrainer@ratcliffecollege.com.