



23 October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you to everyone who has engaged with the issue about the introduction of uniform at Avanti Gardens, Avanti Hall or Avanti Park, either in support of our proposals, or to express concerns. Rather than responding individually, we are taking this opportunity of writing to all parents and carers on behalf of Avanti Schools Trust.

The Trust understands that this is a contentious issue, and we apologise to those of you who feel we have been high-handed or duplicitous in how we have dealt with this. This has not been our intention, but we accept that we could have dealt with the issue more sensitively and reflected back more thoughtfully on the original statement made when we published the Curriculum Review. We acknowledge that many of the concerns raised are genuine and heartfelt, and present perfectly legitimate and reasonable questions. Nevertheless, for sake of balance, we should say that the Principals have also been contacted by a number of parents wholly supportive of the uniform plans. It is also the case that a large number of the free jumpers the Trust will be providing have been already ordered by parents.

Having reflected on the original decision, we continue to believe that the implementation of a uniform will support and promote the new ethos and culture that we wish to promote for these schools, and that pupils will in time feel a sense of pride in wearing the uniform identified with their school. Some members of the Hub Board did express reservations as to timing, and for this reason the decision was taken to support **a phased introduction of uniform between January and September; this remains our intention, and we expect** all pupils at the three schools (with the exception of those listed in the annexe below), to wear uniform at the latest by September 2021; the details of this uniform are reiterated in the appendix to this letter.

We are very conscious about cost, especially in this time of pandemic and financial uncertainty, hence Avanti has offered to provide certain items of uniform, free of cost. A limited number of grants will also be available where appropriate to help families purchase aspects of the uniform; details of how to access the grant will be shared with parents/carers later in the term.

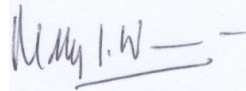
Finally, in response to your feedback, we will not in the short term be introducing blazers as a requirement for secondary pupils at Avanti Hall and Avanti Park, but we will open a further consultation on this subject after Christmas.

We hope that we have gone some way to address at least some of the concerns that have been articulated. We acknowledge the depth of feeling that has been expressed, though it is the case that many thousands of children in this country do wear similar uniforms to school each day, and are proud to be identified with successful schools. They grow up as balanced people, able to express their own individuality – as we hope will be the case for all those young people educated in Avanti schools. If you were to visit one of our established schools, you would find children energised, excited and engaged through their learning: this is our aim for all of our schools.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Younger, Chair, Avanti School Trust



Molly Warrington, Chair, SW Hub Board

### **Appendix 1: uniform requirements**

1. In the primary phase there will be a gender-neutral uniform: a white polo shirt and grey trousers or skirt: these can be purchased according to budget and preferences over fabric and provenance. We will pay for each child to have one jumper with the Avanti logo, and ordered as detailed previously (see link below). However, we will also explore with our supplier the issue of ethically sourced and alternative fabrics. Shoes must be worn, rather than boots.
2. The uniform in the secondary/middle phase in Avanti Hall and Avanti Park will be the same as in the primary phase, except that instead of a white polo, pupils will wear a white shirt; an Avanti tie is also required to be worn.
3. PE kit requirements will be as now for primary and secondary; however, for the secondary phase we will further consult about some additional changes in the spring term 2021.
4. For the current academic year, the following pupils will not be expected to wear uniform, as they will be transitioning to a different school at the end of the school year: Avanti Park – Y8 and Y11; Avanti Hall – Y10 and Y11; Avanti Gardens – Y6.

Avanti logo jumpers will need to be ordered via the school. To order your free jumper please click on the link below:

<https://forms.gle/uQpcWqQeooUzoa729>