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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about school uniform.

Ultimately it is for the school's governing body to decide whether there should be a school uniform in place. However, I know that colleagues in the Department for Education strongly encourage schools to have a uniform as it can play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone. Schools are expected to consult with parents and pupils and take their views into account when setting the school uniform policy.

School uniforms should always be affordable and should not leave pupils or their families feeling that they cannot apply to a particular school. The Department for Education's guidance makes clear that schools' governing bodies should give cost considerations the highest priority and prioritise value for money for parents when setting their uniform policy. I know that Ministers have been looking for an opportunity to put this guidance on a statutory footing. Accordingly, they will be backing a Private Member's Bill on this topic in this Parliament.

The guidance states that uniform items should be easily available for parents to purchase and schools should keep compulsory branded items to a minimum. It also states that schools should avoid single-supplier contracts but where schools do choose to enter into such contracts, they should be subject to a regular competitive tendering process to ensure prices are kept affordable.

Schools are expected to fulfil their duties under equalities legislation and be willing to consider reasonable requests to vary their uniform policy to accommodate an individual pupil's beliefs, disability, or other special consideration. I would strongly encourage any parent concerned about the uniform policy at their child's school to discuss this with the headteacher in the first instance.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY

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