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Starting a new school can be expensive, not to mention having to deal with the cost of lost or damaged clothing and branded school bags. Cutting down on uniform costs can greatly reduce this expense and going second-hand helps save the planet too!

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A range of deals can be found at a number of supermarkets and most parents make a supermarket their preferred choice to buy school uniform items.

Buying your uniform second-hand

Getting your child's uniform second hand can obviously make a big cost saving for you. It is also much better for the environment.

Many schools will have a scheme where you can purchase second-hand school uniforms through the school at a very low cost. These schemes are often run by parent volunteers. Ask your school whether they run such a scheme and if so, how you can get in touch with the person who runs it.

If your school does not run a scheme like this, consider whether you would be happy to help set up and run one yourself. If you decide you would be happy to take on this responsibility, speak to the PTA (parent teacher association) and see if they are willing to support.

Second-hand uniforms won't look brand new, but after two weeks, most clothes no longer look brand new anyway, as children christen them with food stains, and pen and pencil marks!

Social Media and online second-hand sites

Facebook selling groups and other online 'buy and sell' sites can be a great way to grab a school uniform bargain; there are groups in every area, and they can be a great way to get rid of outgrown clothes or buy them more cheaply. Some online sites might be better for the more generic items, like grey, black or navy trousers, shorts and skirts, while others can have branded school uniform items available, like jumpers and book bags. Sites to look at include:

- www.ebay.co.uk
- www.preloved.co.uk
- www.gumtree.com

Local Buying and Selling Facebook pages

Most areas now have community pages on Facebook, and many schools have Facebook pages set up for parents of pupils at that school. Use these to ask questions about school uniform. For example, "Does anyone have a used boys Cheapside School jumper aged 6-7 years that I can purchase?" Often you will get a positive result.

Vouchers and grants

Contact the local authority you live in and ask if they offer vouchers or grants to help with the purchase of school uniform. In some cases, you will need to be registered as using the "Free School Meals Service", but not in all areas.

A school pupil can usually only get one clothing allowance during the school year.

You can use this link, add your postcode and if your local authority has information on how it can help with the cost of school uniform, it will take you to the page: <https://www.gov.uk/help-school-clothing-costs>

Charities

There are some charities that will provide a grant to assist with some of the costs of their child's education. These often have a limited amount of funds available and you generally need to meet specific criteria to qualify for assistance. Visit the [Turn2Us website](#) for more information.

Label your child's uniform

Replacing lost items of school uniform can soon add up, so putting tags on kid's school trousers, shirts, sweatshirts etc helps ensure they don't accidentally go home in another child's school bag.

Invest in quality footwear

Paying a bit more for real leather school shoes from a shoe shop instead of the supermarket could save you having to replace them after one term.

Cover shoes in protection spray to keep them sealed in the wet. You can pick this up in most shoe shops and some supermarkets.

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