

# Trousers for All



## Why are some girls still not allowed to wear trousers to school in the 21st century?

Trousers are worn by girls and women of all ages, cultures and beliefs. In schools across the globe, trousers for girls are commonplace. Yet in the UK, there are some schools that insist that girls must wear skirts only, and would send home any girl who dares to wear trousers.

The trouser ban is not in line with the Equality Act 2010, which puts great emphasis on the avoidance of activities and actions in all spheres of life resulting in one sex being treated less favourably. Furthermore, the Department for Education's documents 'School Uniform' (2013) and 'The Equality Act 2010 and Schools' (2014) stress the need to avoid uniform policies that don't conform to equality principles.

Schools forcing girls to wear skirts is equivalent to states forcing females to wear a veil and to companies forcing females to wear high heels. All of these are expressions of **sexism**.

That is why girls and parents of girls who have been, or are currently, banned from wearing trousers to school have formed **Trousers for All**, a nation-wide campaign against any ban on girls wearing trousers.

Extrapolating from the parliamentary debate on high heels that took place in June 2016 (<http://bit.ly/2a6nTPW>), it is clear that if a pupil or parent thinks that a school's uniform policy contravenes the Equality Act, then they have a responsibility to bring it to the attention of the school.

"At school, skirts for girls suggests a demeanour not required of boys."

**Lord David Pannick QC \***

"The stipulation that boys wear trousers while girls must wear skirts promotes messages that boys are active, while girls should be less active, decorative, and 'demure'. We need to challenge such stereotypical assumptions, and gender discrimination wherever it is found." **Professor Becky Francis, Director of UCL Institute of Education**

"It is 2016; tradition does not mean it is right or we cannot make positive change. [...] We recommend that all schools adopt a gender-neutral uniform where schools simply specify which clothes their students can wear."

**Elly Barnes, CEO of Educate & Celebrate. MBE for services to equality and diversity**

"Insisting that people wear clothing based on their gender (even if gender was as clearly defined as male or female) is a clear breach of this law [the Equality Act] and is discriminatory and unfair. [...] It is important that schools, as places of education, make changes to their own practices in order to ensure equality prevails. If we do not do this then our children will grow up with stereotypical views of the world."

**Mr Jamie Barry, Head Teacher, Parson Street Primary School**

\* *The Times*, 05/10/1999. All other quotes are found on the TfA website.

**For more information about the Trousers for All campaign, please visit [www.trousersforall.co.uk](http://www.trousersforall.co.uk), and follow us on Twitter or Facebook.**