

Schoolwear - UK - November 2010

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What is this report about?

The school uniform market is being hit by many of the same issues as the overall clothing sector, including rising cotton prices, higher manufacturing costs and currency issues. However, it is also facing additional problems that are unique to the sector, including longer lead times due to more specialist retailers being forced to source garments offshore, and the difficulty of predicting stock levels due to varying levels of demand as consumers' buying habits have changed during the recession. All of these issues combined mean that the price of uniforms is set to increase and parents will have to get used to paying slightly more for school garments.



What have we found out?

- The schoolwear market has had a tough few years, falling by 11% since Mintel's last report was published in 2007 as the sector has suffered from price deflation. However, sales value has not fallen as drastically as feared, as the fall in the price of uniforms has been countered by more secondary schools introducing stricter uniform policies.
- The supermarket chains have rapidly expanded their share of the childrenswear market, including schoolwear, as they have been at the forefront of aggressively cutting the price of school uniform. They are currently estimated by Mintel to have around 40% of the total schoolwear market.
- Specialist schoolwear shops have lost market share as they struggle to compete with the prices offered by supermarkets and multiple high street retailers.
- Parents with primary school-age children (ie under-10s) are most inclined to buy schoolwear from whichever shop is cheapest.
- Secondary school parents, on the other hand, are more likely than those with primary school children to buy the best quality schoolwear. They also show a tendency to spend more on items that will last longer.
- Three in ten (29%) parents agree that not enough retailers stock schoolwear all year round. Women and ABs are most interested in year-round availability of schoolwear.

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