Every year growing children need new school uniforms. Some schools require branded schoolwear from a specific dealer, however unbranded uniforms can be found at many retailers.

There is always a great debate about quality versus price, so here are our tips to find the most practical and durable schoolwear and how to keep it at its best.

Remember that you can find great looking second-hand uniforms through school schemes or by exchanging with other parents!

**Fabric facts**

For both winter and summer uniforms, look primarily for fabrics treated with special finishes that will make your life easier, e.g. stain repellent (a must!); easy-care, non-iron or crease-resistant; permanent pleat (for pleated trousers, skirts and pinafores); ink protection in pocket linings; anti-pilling...

All of these finishes will keep clothes looking better for longer between washes, and make them longer-lasting in general.

**Polo shirts, blouses and shirts**

Preferably choose natural materials like cotton for breathability, and consider organic or other sustainable cotton options. For enhanced durability, you can get polyester/cotton fabric blends.

Have a look at the smoothness of seams and placement of labels as some can be itchy for children.

If your child must wear a shirt, preferably choose short-sleeves until they are comfortable with dressing/undressing themselves.

**Jumpers and cardigans**

For jumpers and cardigans, preferably choose wool (which also comes in sustainable options). Wool is a great material as it is breathable, warm, anti-bacterial, and no longer scratchy!

Most jumpers and cardigans will come with an anti-pilling finish to prevent bobbling and colour loss and they are machine washable.

**Blazers, trousers, skirts and dresses**

For these garments, polyester/cotton blend fabrics provide increased durability in combination with the finishes mentioned in ‘Fabric facts’ (left). Blazers are also often treated with a water-repellent finish to keep your child dry in the rain.

Even if a garment size fits your child perfectly, choose a ‘bigger’ size to allow for growth. Most importantly, make sure the garments have an adjustable waistband, hems or cuffs, to follow your child’s growth.

**Who cares, wins**

Check the care label guidelines, separate whites from colours, and wash schoolwear inside out as much as possible.

If you choose schoolwear combining most of the finishes mentioned previously, you will minimise the need for washing and save time (and money)! Some retailers offer schoolwear guaranteed to last for a large number of washes.

**Pass it on**

Pass on old school uniforms to family members, schools or other parents! If they are damaged (and beyond repair), remember you can recycle them in a charity collection bag or in a textile bank.