



Guideline document for setting up: An invitation to Tender

For the Provision of:

.....

Contract to Sell Uniform, Sportswear and Accessories

To be supplied to:

.....

Release Date:	
Version:	
Issuer:	
Supplier Response Required by:	

NB for further information please contact issuer on

This document is intended to assist you when setting up your own Tender process with your suppliers. It is only a suggested format and it is your responsibility to seek specific advice where required and to provide the necessary information and ask the questions that you need answered by a potential specialist supplier. We recommend that you meet prospective suppliers and explain the requirements outlined in this document, but if this is not possible it needs to contain all the information that they might require to give you a full and competitive response.

1. Introduction & Instructions

State the reason that you are sending them this document ie:

Your organisation (name of prospective supplier) has been invited to submit a tender for a Contract to Sell Uniform and Sportswear for and on behalf of Name of School.

Provide a list of documents that you are supplying with the Tender request together with instructions on how and when you want the Tender to be submitted and ask that the tenderer checks that they have received all the documentation.

Any questions or queries relating to this tender should be directed to

You may wish to state here that costs associated with the tender process are the responsibility of the tendering organisation unless you intend to cover them.

2. Background

It is imperative that you supply as much background information as possible about your school. For example; its history, when it was founded, perhaps recent construction or addition of facilities to the school - e.g. a new gymnasium or performing arts building etc. It is important to explain the catchment and demographic from which the school draws its pupils and the number of pupils. Insert any information that you think relevant for a prospective supplier to have. They will need to build a good understanding of the school, its ethos and what you expect from a supplier.

Provide a comprehensive breakdown of numbers of pupils, split by gender and year group. State any specific policy on uniform; for example do the 6th form wear uniform or have a different dress code/uniform to the rest of the school?

You may also wish to give detail on uniform for sports in this section.

3. Objectives of Tender

Explain why you are putting the contract out to Tender - you might explain the history with current suppliers and perhaps whether the current uniform is to continue or if you are looking to effect change (and what change). You should make it clear that you are looking for best practice in the supply and mix of your uniform.

You might wish to discuss your policy/requirements on quality and value, together with your preferred method of supply - for example through the school, local retailer, school shop, online etc. Levels of service (for example, delivery times and range availability) may be important and you may wish to define them to help a prospective supplier understand what you require of them.

If relevant, set out plans for the sports uniform which may differ to the main uniform [and explain whether this will form part of the contract].

4. Tender Process

Here you need to define exactly what you expect the tender process to be. For example do you want this form filled in and then a presentation from prospective supplier with ideas for designs? Specify whether you want them in graphic format or actual garments. Most suppliers will be able to show you mocked up garments if you give them enough time to do so.

You need to state where you expect the presentations to happen. This could be at the school or your evaluation team may wish to visit the supplier premises to see the facilities for themselves, and understand how the business is run. You need to decide which is best for you, but we would recommend the latter since the better you know your supplier and communicate with them, the better they can service your needs.

We suggest that you give a clear procurement timetable showing the dates that are applicable for the tender process and make sure that your prospective suppliers adhere to them. In the suggested timetable, you ought to consider:

When you want the tender document returned, when you will shortlist the candidates/suppliers, when suppliers are to present to your team, when the contract will be awarded, when the uniform design will be agreed and production authorised, when samples will be required for approval at school, when the contract will be awarded and production of the garments is set to commence, when the garments will be available for parents to purchase and your term dates. In particular, you must make clear the date you return to school in September so that the supplier can prepare for this busy period. This should all appear as a table of the timeline, and you should ensure that it is as clear as possible. We suggest that if you want to change school uniform for the following September you should consider making your decisions by Christmas in the year preceding and work back from that date to fit your requirements.

Remember your team need to look at the whole picture for the uniform. They will need to consider costs, product quality, ethical sourcing issues, and ability to service the business to the satisfaction of both the school and the parents. If you need to change the timetable you will need to notify all parties involved in the process and consider how you will make that communication for example an open forum or via email etc.

You ought to outline how you intend to evaluate and score the bidders' responses and what weighting you might give certain information. For example supply capacity/stock levels/quality control/ethical policy etc.

5. Requirements

If your uniform is already specified and you are merely looking for fulfilment specify it here otherwise give some idea of what you would prefer in a uniform so that a specialist supplier is able to produce some detailed ideas for you.

You also need to advise prospective suppliers on exactly what you require from them not just in terms of the uniform itself but also the method of supply. There are a number of different supply methods in the industry. In some parts of the country there are limited or no local suppliers, so other sources of supply may be preferable to you. We have listed these alphabetically but you might consider a combination of approaches.

Direct to parent - usually an order form is distributed to parents/carers and orders are collated and serviced. Sometimes the school will hold an event with the supplier present to help with sizing etc. Garments are then distributed to parents by supplier taking much of the workload away from the school.

Direct to school - if a school is happy to manage the process of supplying uniform they may prefer to do so by working directly with the supplier and taking on the responsibility for ordering and distributing to parents.

In school sell events - a supplier comes in for a number of predetermined dates in the year and sets up a temporary (pop up) shop to sell directly to parents and carers.

In school shop - if a school has the space they may prefer to have a shop on site either run by staff/PTA volunteers or directly by the supplier.

On-line - this gives 24/7 service to parents, you can request a sample set of garments to be available from the school (this can be done with all types of supply) so parents can inspect quality/check sizing before ordering.

Third part retailers - shops will usually be open traditional retailing hours and will stock garments in store for parents to purchase.

Other possible things to consider (but you may have more):

- Whether you require a dedicated account manager for your uniform to help keep communications clear.
- How frequently you wish to meet with your supplier to review the operation of the contract
- How any outstanding issues or feedback needed will be communicated etc.

Understand timescales in the process of the supply of school uniform. Frequently suppliers will turn over 70% of their annual sales in the period leading up to the start of the new academic year. The norm is for bulk orders to be placed in October through to December of the preceding year. Careful consideration of this timetable in your tendering process will give any supplier the best chance of making sure that they can manage their stock holding (or sell it through if you are changing supply) and offer best service to your school and parents/carers. The ideal timetable for a change of supplier tender process would run through April to award the contract in the October for the following September back to school. This timetable is not always possible but should be understood, and if possible accommodated. Clearly the more complicated your requirements, the longer your supplier may need to fulfil your needs if special items are to be manufactured.

6. Terms & Conditions of Contract

Terms and conditions (T&C's) need to be set out for bidders (perhaps by way of a draft contract) including the length it will run. We recommend that all agreements are formally reviewed every three to five years and that you have an annual meeting with your supplier to discuss how the contract is running. At this stage you may wish to define periodic price reviews within the agreed contract period and have a Terms of Service agreement in place. (see point 9 in this document.)

7. Warnings & Disclaimers

You need to make any statements you consider necessary - you may wish to get some legal and/or financial advice as to what wording you wish to use including suggesting that prospective suppliers seek their own advice about the process and contract.

You may wish to consider the following:

- The School does not accept responsibility for accuracy of figures (things change!)
- This is an invitation to tender not a contract
- The requirements of the school could change
- That the supplier should wait for a contract to be formally entered into before buying in any stock.
This should not be regarded as an investment recommendation.
- It is the responsibility of the supplier to accept any costs associated with tendering for this business.
- That all information you have disclosed to bidders is confidential and vice versa.

These are only suggestions, we recommend that you produce your own list and take appropriate professional advice where required.

8. Insurance and documentation

Consider what documentation you may need to see from a prospective supplier.

The following are some suggested ideas but you may have more:

Financial information - audited accounts, management accounts, business plan etc.

Insurance policies – e.g. Employers Liability, Public Liability.

Quality Assurance certificates/accreditations and an outline of due diligence, traceability or product safety procedures.

Data Protection and anti-bribery and corruption compliance policies.

Employment information - equality, health and safety, training staff, modern slavery act compliance.

Environmental and Health & Safety policies.

Ethical sourcing policy

9. Assessing your Tender

When making your decision you may want to consider drawing up a list [of key criteria?] to make sure that you have drawn fair comparisons about what is on offer to you. Presuming that you are looking for durable quality uniform, price is not always the only indicator. This list is not exhaustive you will want to make your own but here are some suggestions.

Are the qualities of the products on offer the same or to requisite specification?

Are the supply avenues what you wanted for your parents?

Is the price fair for the service levels that you are expecting from your supplier?

What added value/unique services are the tenderers offering you?

Have you visited your supplier or considered making a test purchase to see how they perform?

What are their customer service, returns and exchange policies?