

Fundraising a blazing success for Edinburgh School Uniform Bank

A charity set up to ensure that Edinburgh school pupils can all go back to school wearing a new school uniform has run a very successful fundraiser, collecting £5,000 in the first day of their appeal.

The aim is to ensure that all pupils, no matter their family's financial position, can wear a new school uniform in August, and return with dignity, confidence and a sense of belonging. Supporters are asked to "sponsor a child" by donating the cost of a uniform set.

The charity believes that the lives of some children have been turned upside down and many of them miss the routine and normality of conventional school. They will need a sense of belonging more than ever.

Uniform plays an important part in this, but many families have been plunged into crisis in recent months, adding to the thousands of children who are growing up in poverty. Many families do not have their own washing machine, so it is more important than ever that children have enough changes of clothes for school.

Edinburgh School Uniform Bank is a volunteer-run charity which supports families all over Edinburgh from their base in Balerno. They aim to help children to fit in and do their best at school just by providing a new school uniform. They receive requests for help through professionals such as pupil support

teachers and family workers, and their team of dedicated volunteers make up bespoke packs for each child.

Operations were suspended during the lockdown but the requests for help started flooding in as soon as they re-opened. On the first day alone, they received 77 referrals and they expect to receive hundreds more during the rest of the summer.

One of their professional partners said: "Many of the parents have broken down and cried with relief receiving the uniform packs as financial hardship is a huge issue for many of the families we support."

Another referring partner said: "This service has been a huge benefit for all the families that I have referred. If it hadn't been for the service many families may have had to cut back on meals to find money to provide school uniform for their young people."

This year, local children need the community to rally round more than ever.

Edinburgh School Uniform Bank usually ask people to shop for uniform then drop it in to them, but given the current restrictions they are running an online appeal instead at www.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/uniform2020.

Many more donations are needed to make sure that every child has someone buying new school uniform for them. A basic pack of uniform costs around £40 for a child at primary school or £65 for a teenager, and other contributions are also very welcome.