

Expert GH Parent Advice

“Good morning! I am registering over 750 kiddos for the new Live Oak campus and our parents need your advice!

I am looking for your best uniform or school hacks - from lower school shoe brands that last to folding over the upper school skirts to give them another size to grow into to using a coat hanger for pickup cards. Also, if there's anything they *shouldn't* do, brands to avoid, etc, that would be helpful as well. Thank you!”

Uniform pants:

- Old navy –
 - navy pants fade badly
- The Children's Place
 - has great deals throughout the year, can get pants/shorts as low as \$5-7, and they are all adjustable (and free shipping). They are my go-to.
 - The Children's Place has elastic waistband navy shorts for the Kindergarteners and no need for belts (avoids accidents as they won't need to fumble w/ belt/zipper, buttons.) The shorts are “boys” but really they're unisex. – THESE DO NOT HAVE BELT LOOPS!
 - Cat & Jack, & Children's Place are my go-to brands for navy pants/shorts. The don't fade or shrink much and they seem pretty durable.
- Cat & Jack (Target)
 - I have good luck with the Cat & Jack (Target) brand uniform pants. Also, no need to buy a skirt for every day of the week. One or 2 will do.
 - Targets cat and jack uniform pants and shorts for boys don't shrink!
 - If you buy cat and jack pieces keep the receipt, they guarantee them for one year. For example, If you bring in the receipt and the pants rip at the knee they will exchange them.
- French Toast brand
 - French Toast brand shorts and pants off Amazon are the way to go, IMO.
 - French Toast brand pants and shorts are really high quality but run slim.
 - Costco French Toast shorts and pants are our favorite for our kinder guy. The shorts don't fade, the pants slightly so. Size up in the pants, but shorts are true to size. My son loves them.
 - French Toast navy shorts and pants for my son
- Amazon Basics/Essentials
 - The Amazon basics uniform pants and shorts are awesome and inexpensive!
 - Have started buying my Middle Schooler khaki slacks from Amazon. Amazon Essentials @ \$25. He goes through them too fast to keep buying from the uniform store
- We happen to like the Walmart brand of navy pants
- Buy navy slacks in their current size and their next size up during the before school starts sale. They were about \$7 each this way. Our son likes the ones that look like they have buttons at the waist but actually have hooks.

Girl's Uniforms Pieces:

- Don't buy a lot of jumpers in case your daughter doesn't like running in them. It's a love them or hate them uniform item.
- Jumper instead of skirt and polo for my daughter as long as it's allowed- the jumpers are WAY more durable than the polos!
- My girls love the Cat & Jack Knee-High Sock - have in blue and white. Very durable. Also- really ask your daughter if she is ever going to wear pants or shorts before you buy. My daughters have never- so in that case purchase the thicker cable knit tights before it gets cold outside.
- Also, the little ones will need playground shorts under their jumpers.
- Dennis Uniform Store's knee high girls socks didn't last for us, but their ankle socks w/ plaid ruffle have lasted a long time.
- Knee high socks w/ cable design from Target have worked.
- Primary and June & January for navy knee highs and undershorts

Shirts:

- Hold back at least 2 brand new polos for individual and class pictures so they aren't covered in expo marker.
- Scotch Guard those shirts!
- Long sleeved polos aren't worth it- just wear sweater or pullover with short sleeves

Shoes & Accessories:

- Keds School Days shoes - They look precious brand new- but they do not hold up.
- Sideline IV Cheerleading Shoes from Nike - We have made the switch to these. They are durable, comfortable and unlike the keds they are machine washable.
- We got white Plae shoes and they've lasted all year although it's February and they're very worn down. Hoping they last the year but overall they're comfortable and my son loves them.
- Plae black shoes for son and daughter
- We tend to buy two pair of shoes a year to be worn only for school. Honestly, what ever solid black I can find.
- Our first pair of all black shoes did not last (i'll get the brand). Our second pair was New Balance and are going strong.
- My boys have been wearing The Stride Rite Cooper sneakers and they seem to be holding up until they're outgrown.
- New balance white athletic shoes have held up better than KEDS saddle shoes from Dennis.
- Old Navy's brown "leather" belts works for both boys and girls.
- Magnetic belts are great for first graders who aren't used to wearing belts

Tips and Tricks – Uniforms:

- Encourage new families to sign up for Dennis uniform emails so they can take advantage of 20% off sales!! I try not to buy any new uniforms full-price now. Just buy a couple of sizes, leave tags on and then return as needed.
- Then also want them to consider buying used just to have items on hand! Sometimes Dennis has long backorders
- I keep all the uniforms hanging in the laundry room so I can immediately know what's clean and where it all is. That has helped our mornings go more smoothly.
- They can come to the GHNO campus to buy used uniform items like pants during Fiestaval. We will have a booth set up & sometimes even have clean shoes & belts to sell. Just depends what we have been donated.
- Mr. Clean's Magic Eraser cleans great and makes shoes look almost new again.
- Take your children to Dennis to try on before buying anything gently worn from the fb group. Some of the sizes run differently and your child really needs to try on first so you don't buy stuff you can't use.
- Purchase your Winter and Spring concert clothes in advance and make sure your black shoes fit so you aren't dealing with that the week of...
- Dennis does take returns with receipt and any tags attached
- Do not overbuy uniform pieces, especially the expensive ones like skirts and sweaters. 1) they hold up 2) you don't want 3 of something that your kid ends up not liking. My older girls can make it on one skirt, 2 shirts and one sweater/sweatshirt.

Tips and Tricks – Car Line:

- Something way easier than hangers for the pickup cards: buy the clear suction cups with hooks on them and stick one to your windshield under the rear view mirror. Use a hole punch to punch a single hole in the pickup card and viola! It's way easier to store just the pickup card in the car and then pop it on the hook at pickup rather than keeping a huge hanger in your car!
- Laminate pickup cards w/ the kid's schedule on the back (helps to know the schedule when picking up for dr appt, etc.)
- You can laminate your name tags with tape or cut them and put them in a gallon ziplock bag.
- Encourage new families to start a carpool-search now 😊

Labeling:

- Label everything! First and last name
- Include your phone number on the name tag of your uniform so parents can text you if they find your item.
- We use these Avery No-Iron Kids Clothing Labels, Washer & Dryer Safe, Writable Fabric Labels, 45 Daycare Labels, 1 Pack (40700)
- After countless lost pull overs and sweaters I have her initials monogrammed on there now. They are not as bright as they are in the pic and blend in more in person. I still label with Mabel's Labels inside but this has really helped.
- Names in BRIGHT fabric paint inside sweaters and pullovers

School Supplies and Books:

- Also, suggest purchasing all of the Classics to Keep before school starts and label them. You don't want to have to keep up with who is reading what when. Just have on hand so they can take it to school when they start the book.
- And specify the importance of the correct ISBN# to parents.
- Scotch guard polos, lunchboxes, and backpacks
- Stock up on pencils, crayons, and expo markers during back-to-school sales
- Make sure to buy the phonogram cards! Also, download the Spalding app, I think it is \$2.99, it's great for practice and helpful to have the proper pronunciation at your fingertips!