

## **Dress and Appearance Policy**

### **1.0 Introduction:**

This policy establishes our position at The Consortium Trust regarding standards of dress and appearance for all employees including those with temporary contracts, agency workers and volunteers. It is supported by expectations which the Trust sees as necessary to assist staff in adhering to the policy as it is recognised that a considerable range of dress and appearance is appropriate and that this will vary, dependant on the working environment and range of services provided to different user groups in our schools and establishments.

### **2.0 Policy Statements:**

This Policy is underpinned by a number of principles:

1. All members of staff are expected to take a sensible and safe approach to dress and appearance, cleanliness and personal hygiene.
2. Every member of staff is expected to be responsible for promoting a professional and positive image of the Trust.
3. Clothing and appearance will not deliberately cause offence to people who come into contact with, or use, our services. It should be non-offensive and contain no provocative logos or remarks which are inappropriate or likely to give offence to others.
4. Clothing should be worn appropriately for the work being undertaken.
5. Staff exposed to the sun during work based activities should adhere to the HSE guidance.
6. Clothing for particular purposes should be worn in accordance with guidance set out in the School's Health and Safety Policy.
7. Protective clothing should always be available and should, in addition to any other control measure, be worn when carrying out hazardous duties under the Health & Safety Regulations.
8. The requirements of particular faiths to wear specific types of clothing or to dress modestly will be respected so long as the item of clothing does not pose a hazard to the health and safety of employees or contravene any reasonable and legitimate requirements of the Trust.
9. Employees who do not comply with these standards may be subject to the School's normal disciplinary procedure.
10. Employees have the right to lodge an appeal against a decision on the acceptability of their appearance using the Trust's normal grievance procedure.

### **Guidelines:**

#### **3.0 Footwear**

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of all employees to wear footwear suitable for the duties undertaken.
- 3.2 Footwear should be of a 'sensible' nature and worn appropriately, particularly in areas involving direct delivery of services to students, staff, parents and other members of the school community.
- 3.3 'Sensible' includes no flip-flops, other backless or open-toe sandals which will impede safe lifting and handling issues, cause a hazard when walking up and down stairs, offer minimal protection when moving tables/trolleys and occasions when the use of restraint is required. Footwear that might cause injury to others during normal working duties should also be avoided.
- 3.4 Within the special schools all footwear must be fully enclosed to protect from injury that could be caused by wheelchairs, walking frames, built up shoes and splints.

Injury associated with wearing inappropriate footwear will invalidate any claim against the Trust.

#### **4.0 Sports Clothing**

- 4.1 It is recognised that some activities require the wearing of tracksuits or shorts. However, it is expected that staff will revert to normal clothing once the activity is completed.
- 4.2 It is acknowledged that there are some areas of work where, due to the continuous nature of the activity, appropriate tracksuit attire is acceptable during the school day, e.g. PE & ODL staff.
- 4.3 Within the special schools clothing may need to reflect the physical activity required by staff throughout the day.

#### **5.0 Jewellery**

- 5.1 It is good practice to avoid the wearing of jewellery, such as necklaces and earrings that can be hazardous, especially when these can get caught or pulled. The wearing of small studs or sleepers is more appropriate.
- 5.2 For health and safety reasons visible body piercings are strongly advised not to be worn or, where possible, are covered whilst in the working environment

Injury arising from wearing inappropriate jewellery or body piercings will invalidate any related claim against the Trust.

#### **6.0 Badges**

- 6.1 Only work related badges should be worn.
- 6.2 The school's photo identity badges must be visible at all times for security reasons.
- 6.3 In special schools staff may display their badges in a different way for health and safety reasons, depending on the cohort of pupils.

#### **7.0 Hair**

- 7.1 Certain hairstyles and colouring can affect the way people perceive us. Whilst the School is tolerant of differences, consideration should always be given to the impact our appearance might have on others. Long hair should always be worn tied back during hazardous procedures or when handling food.

#### **8.0 Summer Clothing**

- 8.1 During periods of warm weather staff clothing must remain appropriate and suitable. Employees should be aware that certain items of clothing could be seen as provocative, e.g. short, revealing or tight garments, and therefore there is an expectation that these are not worn for work.
- 8.2 Shorts should be tailored, smart and knee length.

#### **9.0 Style of Clothing**

- 9.1 It is not acceptable to wear clothing that over-exposes parts of the body, e.g. stomach, chest, etc. or that is transparent or see-through.
- 9.2 All clothing should cover underwear at all times and within all activities throughout the day.
- 9.3 Denim jeans are not considered to be appropriate professional clothing and therefore should not be worn. There are some exceptions, i.e. the school participating in 'Jeans for Genes Day' etc.

- 9.4 In special schools, where jeans are often worn as protective and are resilient to the activities that staff are required to engage in, they should still be professional in their design and not be ripped or frayed.

## **10.0 Tattoos**

- 10.1 Tattoos on the face or visible above the collar are not permitted. To retain a professional image, where feasible, all other tattoos should be covered. Anyone who has a visible tattoo which could be construed as being offensive to any religion or belief, or is in any way discriminatory, violent or intimidating, will compromise their employment at the Trust.
- 10.2 If an existing member of staff who becomes tattooed in this way may, after investigation, become subject to disciplinary proceedings.

## **11.0 Fingernails**

Use of false fingernails and long nails are discouraged in all settings. However, we respect personal choice and management and therefore suggest a common sense approach to fingernails at work.

- 11.1 If fingernails cause injury to staff at work or children, then any incident will be reviewed and false or long nails may be banned.
- 11.2 Fingernails should not prevent practitioners from their daily duties which may include washing up, changing children's nappies or clothing and other tasks using hands.
- 11.3 Fingernails should be kept presentable and clean, not dirty, chipped or broken.
- 11.4 Employees should not be distracted from their work by fingernails. If they are coming off they will need to be removed promptly and thrown away or kept in a safe place.
- 11.5 Employees wearing false nails must wear gloves when serving or preparing food.
- 11.6 Nails must be of a sensible length. If they are viewed as being too long by your Line Manager you may be asked to cut them to a suitable length.
- 11.7 Injury arising from having inappropriate fingernails will invalidate any related claim against the Trust.

## **12.0 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- 12.1 PPE is provided strictly for occasions where the risk cannot be controlled adequately, or more effectively, by other means. Where safety clothing and personal protective equipment is issued, it must be worn where the risk assessment dictates or as directed in accordance with Health and Safety requirements or as directed by current relevant government guidelines. See Intimate Care Policy
- 12.2 Certain jobs will require employees to wear protective footwear. These staff must wear the correct footwear for undertaking these tasks and if they are uncertain, they must check with their Line Manager.
- 12.3 Failure to comply with any Health and Safety dress requirement may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Injury arising from wearing inappropriate PPE will invalidate any related claim against the Trust.

## **13.0 Personal Hygiene**

- 13.1 Employees are required to have a clean appearance. The Trust recognises that problems in personal hygiene can be related to illness and stress. If a member of staff is concerned about their own or a

colleague's personal hygiene, they should confide in their Line Manager. All discussions will be dealt with confidentially and discreetly.

13.2 Should any employees have difficulties in maintaining these standards they should discuss the matter with their Line Manager.

13.3 Consideration to circumstances will be taken into account in a confidential manner.

#### **14.0 Roles & Responsibilities**

14.1 Head of Services Facilities – will advise on any need for specific safety procedures or protective clothing etc and discuss how to raise any concerns over health and safety issues.

14.2 The Director of Primary Education - will advise on any need for specific clothing requirements for members of staff that deliver curriculum specialisms.

14.3 The Academy Head/Head of Service – will ensure that the principles of this policy are implemented within the area under their responsibility.

14.4 The SLT must ensure that expectations relating to dress and personal appearance are maintained. They must decide on the suitability of dress and appearance taking into account these expectations. In addition, consideration must also be given to likely extremes of temperature, health and safety, hygiene, ethnic, cultural, religious or medical factors and equality.

14.5 Where Line Managers are concerned about an individual's appearance, they should discuss their concerns with that person in the first instance. They must take care not to ignore matters of concern expressed by the member of staff, while ensuring that a reasonable and culturally sensitive dress code is observed. (Managers should remember that they have an option of seeking further advice on the matter from the Academy Head).

#### **15.0 The Employee**

15.1 All employees are individually responsible for their general presentation, appearance and personal hygiene, and have a responsibility to consider how others may perceive their appearance.

15.2 Employees are responsible for following the standards of uniform and dress and appearance as laid down in this policy and should understand how the dress code relates to their working environment, health and safety, their specific role and duties and their contact with others during their employment.

15.3 Failure to adhere to the Trust's standard of dress and appearance may constitute misconduct and could ultimately result in formal disciplinary procedures.

A simple chart in the Code of Conduct/Induction Handbook supports clarity

| Aspect:                   | Guidance:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Example:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Footwear                  | Needs to be safe and appropriate to the role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feet need to be fully covered to prevent injury.</li> <li>• Footwear needs to be supportive.</li> </ul>                                                      | No open-toe sandals.<br>No mules.<br>No high heels.<br>Trainers for PE lessons.<br>Wellingtons for gardening.                                                                                                                                                  |
| Dress                     | Needs to be fit for the role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clothing must not be revealing or sexually provocative.</li> <li>• Clothing must be safe for the environment.</li> <li>• Professional design</li> <li>• Logo free</li> </ul> | Clothing needs to cover the midriff and underwear.<br>No shoestring strapped tops.<br>No low cut tops.<br>No two-piece swimwear unless covering the midriff.<br>Skirts and shorts to be at least knee length.<br>No ties, scarves or hoodies in the classroom. |
| Jewellery and Accessories | Needs to be safe and discreet, with the preference that jewellery is not to be worn within the working environment. Wedding rings accepted.<br>Body piercings to be covered                                                                         | No hoops or dangling earrings.<br>No long chains or necklaces.<br>No bracelets or rings that can catch or scratch.                                                                                                                                             |
| Hair                      | Needs to be safe and professional in style.                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Hairstyle fashion is of course a matter for individual choice. However, staff should be sensible and consider the working environment, being aware of the dangers presented to themselves and the pupils they work with.                                       |
| Fingernails               | Need should be clean and trimmed<br>Trim excessive length to prevent injury                                                                                                                                                                         | No long or protruding nails<br>Gloves to be worn if serving food                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## **16.0 Damage to Personal Property**

- 16.1 Staff are advised not to wear items of clothing of high value. If a member of staff has an item of clothing damaged in the course of carrying out their duties, a proportion of the cost of replacement will be reimbursed, up to the value of £30. All claims must be supported by a valid receipt.
- 16.2 Re-imbursement (part or whole) for loss or damaged personal property will be considered by the Director of Finance and Resources on an individual basis.
- 16.3 Staff must request re-imbursement in writing within 1 working day of the loss or damage becoming known to them. A statement is to be submitted as a record of events with details of any witnesses to the event.
- 16.4 As soon as possible the member of staff should obtain replacement quotes and valuations which should be submitted via the Office Manager

- 16.5 All staff must be aware and consider safety and security of their personal property. Neglect to make personal property secure and safe will result in non-payment of the claim.
- 16.6 If glasses are damaged and are in need of replacement or repair, colleagues should seek to claim against their own insurances.
- 16.7 A contribution towards the cost can be claimed up to the value of £100, on production of a valid receipt, towards any excess charges incurred.
- 16.8 Colleagues are advised not to wear designer, high value glasses to work.

## Document Control

### Changes History

| Version | Date       | Amended By                                  | Details of Change                                                       |
|---------|------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| V2      | 20/05/2021 | Liz Frere-Smith, HoS People                 | Scheduled review, correction of role names, minor additions to 8.1/11.1 |
| V2.1    | 15/06/2021 | Liz Frere-Smith, HoS People                 | Specific reference to footwear                                          |
| V3      | 09/03/2023 | Liz Frere-Smith, HoS People                 | Amended details re special schools, added section regarding fingernails |
| V4      | 29/01/2024 | Lisa Jones, Director of Finance & Resources | Addition of section 16 – Damage to personal property                    |

### Approval

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years by Head of Service for People or as required by changes in legislation.

At every review, this policy will be approved by the Executive Committee.

The policy was last approved by the Executive Committee on 10/03/2025.

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