

Student Dress Code Policy

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| Author | Deputy Executive Principal Teaching Learning & Improvement |
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** Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require*

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Related policies/documents:

Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures;
Safeguarding Policy; and
Annual Equality and Diversity Report

1. Scope and Purpose

Introduction

The term “College” refers to Dartford, Gravesend, Tonbridge and Hadlow College campuses.

In practice, people’s choice of dress has created very few difficulties within the College over the years. However, some choices or prohibitions are occasionally problematic or even contentious. This Dress Code Policy is therefore intended to provide clarity and consistency across the college about the appropriateness of students’ dress.

The Policy on Dress is based on a set of principles rather than on a list of “Do’s and Don’ts” that are often too narrow and rigid. These principles (listed below) are mandatory in themselves but need to be applied with sensitivity, good judgement and discretion where appropriate.

2. Definitions of dress

The word “dress” is used here in a broad sense to cover any aspect of the following: clothing, accessories; jewellery; body decorations, piercing and tattoos; hairstyles and headdress; perfumes and body odours; footwear; and objects, slogans or symbols worn or carried in any way on the person.

3. Scope

The code applies to all students on College premises and on external premises used for part of the course (such as work placements, residential venues, or on trips and visits).

4. Principles

- 4.1 Wherever possible, people should be able to adopt whatever sort of dress they choose and they should feel free to express themselves in dress. However, this freedom exists only if people’s choices do not breach the principles below and/or cause offence to other college users.
- 4.2 People are expected to take responsibility for dressing in ways that are appropriate to the activity and being work ready for the activity they are involved in. They should recognise that some forms of dress can pose an unreasonable challenge or be unreasonably provocative, in a variety of ways, to others who share college premises or experiences with them. This is also implied in the Learning Agreement, which expects students to behave in ways, that: “respect the rights of others and complies with College policies and procedures”.

- 4.3 The expectation is that all students must be showing personal commitment to work readiness. This means wearing your ID and lanyards, in all classrooms workshops (where possible) and public or shared areas of the College.
- 4.4 Exceptions. There may be times when students wish to support different charities and they would like to ask for exceptions to the normal dress code rules, for example *Jeans for Genes* day/*Children in Need* Day. On these occasions, authorisation may be required by the Head of Curriculum.

5. Security, Health and Safety

- 5.1 The security, health and safety of students, staff and visitors to the College is of paramount importance and the ability to identify all personnel on site is important. Personal identification must be worn at all times in College. This will be the College's identification badge and appropriately coloured lanyard.
- 5.2 Dress needs to be appropriate for the activity and environment to ensure safety. For example:
 - 5.2.1 hair may need to be covered or tied back in kitchens, during sports activity or in beauty salons;
 - 5.2.2 those taking part in sporting activities will be asked to remove jewellery or accessories if these pose a risk; and
 - 5.2.3 where prescribed protective clothing/equipment (such as hard hats or steel-capped footwear) is essential and must be worn in certain workshops or learning environments. Refusal to adhere to expected PPE would result in disciplinary action.
- 5.3 Covid 19 Face coverings.

Wearing a face covering may be required by law when travelling as a passenger on public transport in England. Some people are exempt from wearing a face covering for health, age or equality reasons. The College will follow the recommended guidelines for the wearing of a face covering in place. If you are exempt from wearing a face covering, then let a member of staff know and you will be provided with an exemption-coloured lanyard to prevent continuous challenge.
- 5.4 For religious, cultural or personal reasons, individual students may make dress choices that may need to be reviewed in line with safety, for example using equipment or machinery and other course/learning requirements. Transgender and gender non-conforming students who wear uniforms may wish to adapt their uniform to what they feel most appropriate. In such circumstances, the situation will be discussed on a student-by student basis so that a uniform still complies with the curriculum area expectation.

- 5.5 All students are expected to wear their lanyard and ID cards on campus. Identification photographs must show the full face. Any member of staff can verify the identity of students at any time. Students are expected to adhere to this request. The College will observe sensitivity in taking photographs and visual identification where any facial coverings are worn.

Any request to remove religious dress that covers the face to check identification should be dealt with in a sensitive manner taking account of dignity, courtesy and respect.

For students who cover their face, an appropriate member of staff in a private area should ask the individual to provide their ID card showing their face and to remove their veil for the purposes of the identify check. Students who cover their face must always wear their lanyard visibly.

6. Full participation in learning or College activities

If a student's face is partially or fully obscured for any reason (for example by hats, hoods, veils, sunglasses, balaclavas, scarves, etc.) these dress choices may be discussed on a student-by-student basis. However, the expectation of the College is that where students make a dress choice based on personal preference, e.g. a hoodie or sunglasses, the learner can reasonably be expected to remove these items to support effective learning, assessment and work readiness. If, for medical reasons, a learner is required to wear sunglasses or other dress options these will be discussed and agreed on a learner-by-learner basis. It is expected that students have a religious, cultural or substantial personal reason for dress choices that may obscure the face.

The promotion of harmony amongst different groups represented in the College and the avoidance of giving offence, as far as can reasonably be expected, in a heterogeneous and multi-cultural setting and society are key principles. Examples of infringements might include items of dress such as:

- 6.1 t-shirts bearing offensive slogans or images;
- 6.2 particularly revealing items of clothing (e.g. ultra-short shorts or very low-cut vests);
- 6.3 visible tattoos that contain pornographic images; and/or
- 6.4 racist badges (such as a swastika).

Students are expected to comply with the requirement that they do not make dress choices that may cause offence.

7. Applying the Principles

It is recognised that the contexts in which students learn and study can differ widely. Therefore, each case will need to be considered in the light of the particular circumstances and judged with sensitivity and care, although without compromising the general principles. Advice can be sought if needed from a senior member of the curriculum team, where the issues or learners' responses are not straightforward.

8. Contraventions of the Dress Code and appropriate sanctions

If a student either knowingly or unintentionally, breaches the College Dress Policy, the matter should be referred to the relevant manager to review the situation and to, as appropriate:

- 8.1 discuss the matter with the student concerned, explaining clearly in what way they have breached the Dress Code, what is then expected and for what reasons;
- 8.2 if the infringement is serious enough or repeated, the student should be asked to remove or change the item/s of dress and/or may be sent home from College the same day. The student would then be re-admitted to College as soon as they comply with the Dress Policy. However, repeated and/or serious infringements of the Policy would invoke the relevant student Disciplinary Procedures at an appropriate level;

In the case of a prospective student, the interview or enrolment can still take place where the person is unknowingly breaching the Dress Policy in minor ways, although they should be informed about the Dress Policy during the interview, so they are prepared for future attendance.

However, in less common cases where the breach is significant, the prospective student should have the Dress Code explained to them and be asked to return in acceptable dress before an interview is completed.

9. Equality and Diversity

Students can expect an inclusive and supportive learning environment whatever their background.