

Dress and Appearance Policy

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Person Responsible	Deputy Chief Executive
Approval/ review body	SLT
Frequency of Review*	36 months

** Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require*

Review History:		
Date of review	Reviewed by	Reason for review
January 2012	HR Director	New Policy
February 2015	HR Manager	Title change of Person Responsible
February 2018	HR Manager	Scheduled review/update and change of title of Person Responsible
September 2022	Head of HR	Scheduled Review

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Related policies/documents:

- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Staff Disciplinary policy and procedure

1. Purpose

North Kent College, which includes the General Further Education campuses at Dartford, Gravesend and Tonbridge as well as the land-based offer at Hadlow College (“the College”) has issued this policy as a guide for employees on the required standards of dress and appearance. Employees’ appearance must be professional at all times, both within the workplace and when representing the College.

2. Definitions

Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”) refers to protective clothing, helmets, goggles or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection.

Uniform clothing which identifies the Department in which the member of staff works – i.e. Hair, Beauty, Sports etc.

3. Scope

This policy is a guide to the required standards of dress and appearance for staff, volunteers and temporary workers such as employment agency placements.

The policy is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff must use common sense in adhering to the principles underpinning the policy.

The College recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress, appearance and uniform/PPE requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations.

The leadership and management of the College has the discretion to judge what is and is not appropriate for the purposes of this policy. The College will specify where uniform/PPE is required.

4. Policy Statement

4.1. The College wishes to maintain a professional standard which is acceptable to its students, staff and customers. Whilst not wishing to suppress individuality, the College needs to limit excess or extremes which could be off-putting to students and customers or which would not be in keeping with the College’s image and values.

- 4.2. Suitable smart, business appropriate, clothing should be worn for all work activities and when representing the College, with the exception of the circumstances laid out in paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 below.
- 4.3. The College recognises the diversity of religious beliefs and nothing in this policy should be read as impinging on staff rights to dress according to their beliefs.
- 4.4. All employees are required to be neat, clean and tidy whilst at work, presenting a positive image of the College.
- 4.5. Dress should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to a misunderstanding but should enhance the professional relationships the College has with its students, customers and visitors. It is expected that employees will apply a **common sense** approach and dress in an appropriate smart manner.
- 4.6. The security, health and safety of staff, students and visitors to the College is of paramount importance and will take precedence at all times. One vital component of this is the ability to identify all personnel on site. Therefore, College's identification badge and lanyard must be worn at all times in College, unless doing so will result in the wearer to be in breach of Health and Safety.
- 4.7. Any clothing, which is required to be worn for practical lessons, such as Sport, Dance, or Land Based etc. or hygiene reasons, is outside the scope of these guidelines. Where specific PPE and clothing has been issued, such items must be worn where appropriate. Health and Safety considerations take precedence at all times.
- 4.8. Some Departments provide uniforms for staff to wear during working hours. Where uniforms are provided, they must be worn for work activities, unless otherwise directed by the line manager.
- 4.9. The wearing of clothing items deemed to be inappropriate may result in disciplinary action.

5. Inappropriate Attire/Appearance

The following should be taken into consideration when determining what is regarded as inappropriate clothing and appearance for the workplace:

- 5.1. slogans or pictures on clothing and bags which contain: nudity; foul or discriminatory language; and/or vulgarity;
- 5.2. clothes of a revealing nature;

- 5.3. sport related attire, including t-shirts/tops with slogans relating to football teams or other club crests, would not be appropriate or could be construed as being offensive/inflammatory;
- 5.4. any clothing which is torn, damaged or unclean;
- 5.5. any articles of clothing, jewellery or footwear which may present a health and safety hazard;
- 5.6. hoods, hoodies or headwear that obscures the face, unless part of accepted religious practice or PPE; and
- 5.7. large, visible, tattoos which contains nudity; foul or discriminatory language; and/or vulgarity must be covered, during term time or when representing the College.

The above are just a few examples of what would be regarded as inappropriate attire for the workplace.

These restrictions are in place, as some articles of clothing may be regarded as: offensive; discriminatory in terms of sex or sexual orientation, religious beliefs, racial/ethnic origins/any other discriminatory grounds; or which may cause health and safety concerns. As mentioned under item 4.6, Health and Safety considerations take precedence at all times.

Employees are reminded that if they have any doubts as to whether an article of clothing is inappropriate, then it is likely that others will share this doubt and may be offended. In those circumstances, employees should choose another, more appropriate, item of clothing in order to comply with this policy.

There may be occasions when a manager feels it is appropriate for staff to wear casual clothing. Managers will advise staff if they should be wearing casual clothing for specified events (i.e. staff development days, trips, charity events and visits).

For further clarification on the suitability of any items of clothing, employees should please contact their line manager.

6. Employees who are required to wear protective clothing and equipment

- 6.1. Employees who occupy roles that require PPE e.g. hard hats, masks and gloves, protective footwear etc. are required to wear this clothing whilst carrying out their duties whenever required by law or by College rules.
- 6.2. In addition, any employee whose job involves working with machinery/ working with food must keep his/her hair either short or tied back and jewellery kept to a minimum. These rules are in place for safety/hygiene reasons.

- 6.3. Where PPE equipment has become damaged/not fit for purpose, the employee must advise their manager immediately they become aware of the fault.
- 6.4. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that good care is taken of their PPE.
- 6.5. PPE issued by the College remains the property of the College and must be returned when leaving the employment of the College.