# Dress Code Policy

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1. **INTRODUCTION**
   1. The East London NHS Foundation Trust (The Trust) is committed to ensuring its employees convey a professional appearance and attitude to their work at all times and should not place themselves or service users at unnecessary risk. To function safely and effectively, the Trust needs to ensure that employees comply with a dress code.
   2. The Trust recognises and celebrates the diversity of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to clinical, health and safety, security and infection control considerations.
   3. The purpose of the dress code is to ensure that employees protect themselves and patients for work in a manner that complies with a number of Trust policies including but not limited to infection control, health and safety and professional boundaries policies.
2. **AIM**
   1. The dress code policy is designed to guide managers and employees on the application of Trust standards of dress and appearance. This policy is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance and staff should use common sense in adhering to the principle underpinning the policy.
   2. The aim of the dress code policy is:

* To provide a practical dress code with a professional style that promotes patient, employee and public confidence.
* To comply with Infection Prevention & Control and Health & Safety Legislation.
* To ensure that all staff are familiar with current evidence available on wearing of suitable dress or uniforms.
* To ensure staff project a professional image.
* To promote mobility and comfort of the wearer.
* To allow identification for security and communication purposes.

1. **SCOPE OF THE POLICY**
   1. This policy applies to all employees of the Trust, including but not limited to staff on substantive/fixed term contracts, bank staff, agency staff, medical staff, staff on honorary contracts, students and volunteers when working on Trust premises or in patient homes, or when representing the Trust in other settings. Staff working in other settings, such as hospitals, will also need to adhere to any local dress code policies.
2. **RESPONSIBILITY**
   1. Responsibility for complying with the dress code policy lies with the individual employee. The Trust expects employees to demonstrate good judgement and professional taste. If the employee has cultural and/or religious beliefs that make it challenging for them to comply with this policy they must discuss this issue with their line manager immediately.
   2. Line managers must take advice from specialist advisers (e.g. Prevention and Management of Violence and Aggression instructors, Infection Prevention & Control team, Occupational Health, People and Culture) if they are unsure whether safe practice is being adopted.
3. **GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BE ADOPTED BY ALL STAFF**
   1. **CLOTHES** 
      1. Employees must ensure that their garments are presentable, clean, of good fit and are suitable for their roles and responsibilities.
      2. The clothes worn should be appropriate for attendance at work i.e. business type dress, uniform, smart casual, in good condition.
      3. Staff should refer to their professional code of conduct on maintaining professionalism however the following is not permitted in any work area or when representing the Trust:

* Low waistband trousers showing the abdomen/lower back allowing underwear to be visible,
* Cropped tops, showing the abdomen/lower back,
* Strapless or revealing tops,
* Excessive jewellery other than jewellery stated in the policy,
* Outfits which have slogans which may be offensive,
* Other items which may not project a professional image, such as baseball caps, T-shirt with offensive language and hoodies with the hood up.

1. **NAME BADGES**
   1. All staff must wear a name badge at all times which should show a current recognisable image. The name badge should only be removed for safety reasons and the Yellow badge (‘Hello my Name is…’ badge) worn to still show the staff members’ name. Employees working in the community must carry their ID badges with them at all times and this must be visible when on duty or acting in an official capacity representing the Trust.
   2. If worn, neck lanyards must have a quick safety clip. If the lanyard becomes visibly soiled it must be changed as soon as practicably possible; lanyards should also have three safety breaks.
   3. Student nurses are issued Trust ID badges which they must wear at all times to show proof of key worker status.
   4. Managers and employees can access new name badges and lanyards from the Resourcing Department. If an employee changes roles within the Trust, the Resourcing Department should be contacted to arrange a new badge with the correct job title on it.
2. **HAIR, HAIR ATTIRE AND BEARD**
   1. Hair and beardsshould be neat and clean. Long hair should be tied back when handling food or when undertaking physical or clinical interventions with service users. Hair slides, clips ribbons and other fastenings must be discreet.
   2. Hats and caps for example baseball cap should be removed when inside a Trust building and when interacting with patients either in a clinical setting or in their homes.
   3. Due to cultural/religious beliefs there are some staff who wear head attire for example head scarves/turbans – these must be maintained in a clean, tidy condition, conform to Health and Safety and Security Regulations and Infection Prevention and Control.
3. **JEWELLERY**
   1. In order to maintain a professional image in clinical and non-clinical areas jewellery should be kept to a minimum.
   2. Any facial jewellery with the potential to snag should be removed, such as dangly earrings.
   3. Religious / cultural artefacts can be worn providing they are discreet and do not present an infection prevention & control issue.
   4. Rings with stones must not be worn in clinical areas as they compromise hand hygiene. Only plain band wedding ring is permitted. This includes non-clinical staff who are working in clinical area i.e Reception Staff. In addition jewellery, including watches, necklaces and all rings must be removed when entering a clinical area and if dealing directly with patients, in situations likely to cause injury to patients, staff or visitors.
   5. Body piercing should be covered and kept to a minimum for health and safety and infection control reasons.
   6. The Trust will not be liable for any injury sustained by an employee caused by the wearing of any jewellery.
   7. The security of jewellery that an employee has been asked to remove remains the responsibility of the wearer. The Trust is not liable for any loss.
4. **NAILS**
   1. Nails should be kept short and particular attention paid to them when washing hands as most microbes on the hands come from beneath the finger nails.
   2. Particular attention should be paid to nails for those undertaking clinical procedures and handling food.
   3. Artificial/acrylic/shellac nails or nail polish must not be worn when delivering clinical care.
   4. When undertaking clinical activity long sleeves should be rolled up to ensure bare below elbow. This is to promote good hand hygiene practice.
5. **TATTOOS**
   1. Tattoos are to be covered as much as possible and where present, the individual with the tattoo, should be mindful of the potential offence to others. Where tattoos could be deemed to be offensive to patients or colleagues, they should be appropriately covered where possible. If in doubt, staff should seek advice from their Directorate People Business Partner.
6. **FOOTWEAR**
   1. Sensible footwear must be worn and should be viewed as protection to feet. Employees must be able to respond to any emergency situation without placing themselves at risk, therefore, the wearing of opened toed or open backed types of footwear, high heeled shoes and flip flops should be avoided in clinical areas.
   2. Staff are not permitted to wear flip flops or stilettos (no more than 6 cm). Open toed shoes or sandals worn in non-clinical areas are worn at the individuals’ own risk. Open toed shoes must not be worn in clinical areas.
7. **OUTER GARMENTS**
   1. No outer garments for example jackets should be worn in clinical areas or when interacting with patients, for example on the ward or in a patient’s home. Staff can however wear fleeces and cardigans as long as they can be bare the below elbow when undertaking a clinical intervention.
   2. If an employee has to move from an outer area into a clinical setting or into a Trust building, employees must leave their outer wear in a designated area.
   3. Staff on community visits can wear appropriate coat or jackets in patients’ homes; this must however be removed prior to undertaking any clinical care.
8. **UNIFORM**
   1. Uniform is provided by the Trust as protective clothing for use on duty and remains the property of the Trust at all times.
   2. Uniform can be ordered via local arrangements; staff should contact their line manager for further information.
   3. When wearing uniform members of staff should remember that the image of their professional group as well as the Trust is influenced by their appearance and behaviour.
   4. Staff who smoke must not smoke in uniform or be identifiable as a health care worker. For further details refer to the smoking policy.
   5. Staff should avoid wearing uniform in public wherever possible.
9. **PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**
   1. The primary uses of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is to protect staff and reduce opportunities for transmission of micro-organisms.
   2. Personal protective equipment can be used for a variety of activities.
   3. Please see the Infection Prevention and Control Policy manual for further details.
10. **DISAGREEMENT**
    1. Managers are responsible for ensuring this policy is followed consistently and appropriately. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of rules rather to give a general indication of the expected standards.
    2. Where the staff member and line manager disagree on the application of this policy, the matter should be referred to the next in-line manager.
11. **FAILURE TO COMPLY**
    1. Employees who do not adhere to the dress code policy will be asked to return home to change into more suitable clothing and to pay back any working time lost. Continued failure by a member of staff to adhere to this policy will be managed under the Trust’s Disciplinary Policy.
12. **POLICY REVIEW**
    1. The dress code policy will normally be reviewed every three years, however, should there be a change in professional regulation requirements, legislation or business requirement, the policy will be reviewed to align with these.