

Dress code Policy

For all staff and students

(For staff required to wear a uniform the uniform policy should be adhered to)

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Ratified by:

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Version 1

Background

In many healthcare settings across the country, staff and students (work experience, Btec, medical etc) in both clinical and non-clinical areas are found not to wear a uniform when working. However, it is vital that staff at all levels and disciplines including students, portray a positive and professional image to the public, stakeholders and service users of all ages and backgrounds. Staff and students within healthcare environments must also act as professional role models for patients.

To ensure that these objectives are met, there is a need to clarify and define acceptable standards of dress and personal appearance for staff and students working within the non-uniform areas (DOH 2007). In addition there is a duty to ensure that any clothing and accessories worn by staff and students, who are not required to wear a uniform, are not potential hazards to the wearer, their colleagues or patients.

It is also important that any clothing or accessories worn by staff or students do not cause offence to patients, visitors or colleagues i.e. t-shirts with inappropriate logos, excess cleavage on view etc.

Aim

This policy is applicable to all staff, medical, nursing AHP etc and all groups of students working within East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust. It is designed to ensure that staff and students are aware of the necessity to present a positive image as representatives of the service and maintain the highest standards at all times.

Staff are also required to dress in a way that Health & Safety at work is acknowledged. It is noted that staff and students may be required to attend formal meetings in non-clinical areas or represent the organisation externally, at such times the dress code is "Business Dress" i.e. smart not casual.

Protective clothing/ equipment (PPE) will be made available to staff and students when required to carry out their duties in accordance with health and safety procedures and following risk assessment.

Implementation of the dress code - applies to all staff, medical staff included

In September 2007, the government announced that clinical staff in the NHS acute hospitals would adopt a dress code that supports good clinical practice in relation to healthcare associated infections. Under this code, **all** clinical staff should be 'bare below the elbows' when carrying out clinical duties with direct patient contact, this includes doctors rounds (DOH 2007). All staff are required to adhere to this policy when entering clinical areas. **The following contains key infection control elements that are compulsory.**

Key requirements are:

- Neck ties, if worn, **must be removed or tucked in** (other than bow ties) **when delivering direct patient care.**
- Ideally wear short sleeved shirts *or* roll sleeves up above the elbow when delivering any hands on care.
- Cardigans, jumpers, sweatshirts etc must be removed prior to any clinical activity and patient contact.
- Do not wear any hand jewellery/wristwatch apart from a plain wedding band (if desired/ appropriate).

Agency staff/work experience students and all others visiting professionals working in clinical areas are expected to adhere to the hospital dress code/uniform policy as appropriate.

All staff and students are responsible for ensuring that they personally meet the required standard of dress. However, the Nurse in charge / Lead Consultant / Head of Service/Department will have the final say as to whether a member of staff or student meets the standard and have the right to instruct them to remedy the situation if they do not. Cultural differences/needs should always be acknowledged.

Staff and students must wear identity badges at all times. These have a variety of fastenings so that they can be worn in a position that is comfortable and easily seen without embarrassment to service users. Where staff are wearing ID badges on professional lanyards or 'cloth necklaces' these should be of a snap type so there is no risk of staff being gripped or strangled by the necklace.

These lanyards must be clean; staff should have sufficient quantity to allow regular washing. Patients have a right to know who is looking after them; therefore badges should be worn with:

- with the appropriate fastening
- Clearly visible *and*
- Be in date

Professional lanyards only ***available from supplies:***

Textile badge necklace

Code: WYQ797 - Blue - box of 10 - £12.09

Code: WYT027 - Black – box of 10 - £8.84

Lapel clips

Code: WXA504 – box of 100 - £16.03

East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust recognises and values the differences in people. In carrying out our duties as employer and service provider we will act to promote equality for all regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation. We respect and uphold the right of individuals to the lawful expression of these differences, which may have implications for the kind of clothing worn by staff. This we acknowledge and advise that cases are discussed on a one to one basis with line management. An EIA screening has been applied to this document and is written so as not to discriminate on gender issues and therefore has no adverse impact on any of the equality groups.

There will be occasions and exceptions within this policy for those with disability, either permanently or following injury or where staff will have additional needs. Should there be an additional need or there is a faith/cultural requirement, e.g. the adapted clothing to assist with disability, items of jewellery specific to faith, such exceptions will be agreed in discussion with their line/departmental manager.

General Appearance

All staff and students are responsible for ensuring that they personally meet the required standard of dress. However, the person in charge of the service or department will have the final say as to whether a member of staff or student meets the standards and therefore have the right to instruct them to remedy the situation if they do not.

Individual appearance must reflect a high standard of cleanliness and hygiene at all times. All staff and students must ensure good personal daily hygiene. If there is concern regarding poor personal hygiene, the issue should be addressed and managed by the line manager and /or department heads. Male staff and students should be clean shaven except where they have a beard or moustache, which should always be clean and neatly groomed. The beard should be trimmed or worn in such a way as not to impede activity.

Hair should be clean, brushed and within the range of normal colourings. Staff and students, especially those working with the general public, should ensure that hair is off their face (so that they do not hide behind their hair) and can be tied back/up out of the way if required.

The chewing of gum at work is prohibited in all areas.

Hands and nails should be well manicured and to avoid an impression of poor hand hygiene be free from ingrained substances i.e. nicotine. Nails should not be so long that they would cause injury in a restraint situation or puncture gloves whilst worn during a clinical procedure.

Rings must be small enough to allow the use of gloves, with no risk of tearing the gloves; or removable if gloves need to be applied.

Nail jewellery or nail art is not allowed. Jewellery may be worn as long as it does not detract from the professional image of the staff member.

If, staff are involved with direct clinical care then the wearing of jewellery should be as per the uniform policy. Certain jewellery i.e. wristwatches should be removed prior to any direct clinical activity/patient care or moving and handling, i.e. lifting patients.

Visible body piercing should be kept to a minimum, discreet, inoffensive and not present a safety hazard.

Long, dangly earrings may represent a safety hazard to staff and account of the persons working environment should be taken into consideration.

Inappropriate tattoos must be covered at all times. The head of service/department will be responsible for determining whether a tattoo is inappropriate or not i.e. any tattoo with offensive language is deemed offensive. It is acknowledged that some religions/cultures use henna to decorate their bodies at certain times and this is acceptable.

Clothing

Generally clothing that is conservative "smart but casual" may be worn. Staff and students should wear clothes that are comfortable and not overly restricting, clothing should allow for a full range of movement and should not hinder during moving and handling procedures.

Clothing should present a relaxed professional image. Any makers' logo/slogans should be discreet and not likely to cause offence.

Underwear should not be visible either through clothing or because outer clothing does not cover underwear adequately. Staff and students should not wear clothing that will show their underwear whilst undertaking their normal duties at work - this includes tasks such as examining patients, stocking shelves and providing reception/front of house services.

Where a headscarf or veil is worn as part of a religious observance staff must ensure that the flow of the garment does not interfere with work practice.

Shoes should be clean, in good condition and should not be a safety hazard to the wearer especially if she/ he have to run in response to an emergency. Departmental risk assessments will indicate which staff are required to wear specific (protective) footwear.

Acceptable for work wear

- Skirts and dresses of an appropriate length i.e. skirts not so short as to reveal the wearers underwear.
- Smart but casual trousers/city shorts - not denim.
- V neck or round necked jumper/ cardigan.
- Low heeled/ flat shoes.
- Short or long-sleeved shirts/blouses or polo shirts

Not acceptable for any staff or students

- T-shirts with advertising or inappropriate/ offensive language or pictures
- T-shirts with cut away arms e.g. muscle man shirts
- See through shirts / blouses - unless coverage is provided by an undergarment.
- See through dresses / skirts or trousers
- Low cut necklines, i.e. excess cleavage on view
- Skirts/ dresses with extreme slits, or short enough to reveal underwear
- Denim clothing i.e. jeans, unless specifically agreed by line manager
- Any clothing that is torn, frayed or faded or otherwise distressed by design or accident
- Athletic wear and jogging bottoms/ tops
- Sunglasses unless prescribed for a medical condition or used whilst driving

- Bra tops - It is acknowledged that many staff wear sleeveless tops during the summer, vest tops may be appropriate provided the top covers flesh appropriately
- Midriff baring tops/ trousers
- Halter or backless tops
- Stiletto heeled shoes or shoes with a heel of more than 3 inches (for those staff working in clinical areas as this could impede movement in an emergency)
- Belts with large buckle motifs for staff working in clinical areas

Protection of self and clothing

Some staff that work both within a hospital setting and in the community, who do not wear uniform, may at times find themselves participating in practice which can expose them to body fluids, e.g. blood and urine. Staff must wear gloves and aprons at all times during such procedures. Where personal clothing becomes soiled with bodily fluids the laundering of such should be as per recommendations in the Uniform Policy.

Expected standard	Reason
<p>Clothing: Must project a positive professional image and must not cause embarrassment or offence to colleagues, patients other staff or visitors to the organisation.</p> <p>Clothes must be clean and tidy</p>	<p>To promote a reassuring and professional image.</p> <p>To minimise cross infection</p>
<p>All clothing must allow for full range of movement. Clothing must not impair hand hygiene and clothing must not come in to direct contact with patients or body fluids.</p> <p>When staff are involved in direct patient care but do not have a uniform then aprons single use, disposable must be worn. Aprons when worn should be appropriate to use and fit for purpose.</p> <p>Sleeves: for clinicians and others who wear their own clothes for clinical work, short-sleeved shirts/blouses (or rolled up sleeves) with no jacket are appropriate for work involving direct patient contact. If long sleeved shirts/blouses are worn then they must be rolled up prior to engaging in direct clinical work and prior to hand hygiene.</p> <p>Neck ties: It is recommended that wherever possible clinical staff should when carrying out clinical duties remove or tuck in neck ties (other than bow ties) when delivering direct patient care (DOH 2007). In certain clinical areas clip ties should be used in the interest of safety.</p> <p>Headscarves: where a scarf or a veil is worn as part of religious observance, staff must ensure that the flow of the garment does not interfere</p>	<p>To minimise cross-infection.</p> <p>To minimise cross infection.</p> <p>Long sleeves impair the ability to wash hands and may become soiled or contaminated. Sleeves are especially problematic when washing with soap and water following contact with body fluids or with a patient colonised or infected with Clostridium Difficile.</p> <p>To prevent contamination and protect staff from injury</p> <p>To minimise cross-infection</p>

with work practice.	
White coats: White coats when worn as uniform must be clean and in a good state of repair. The wearing of a white coat over personal clothing does not negate the need to adhere to this dress code.	<p>To promote a reassuring and professional image.</p> <p>To minimise cross infection.</p>
<p>Footwear: High heels, platform shoes, clogs and sling back shoes can present risk when working with clients and therefore are not acceptable.</p> <p>Open toes shoes are acceptable in the summer months (June – September), but for staff working within the clinical environment it is deemed safer to ensure shoes are closed in.</p>	To prevent contamination and protect staff from injury
<p>Jewellery: Jewellery is not acceptable for all staff involved in direct patient care within the clinical environment, but is permissible for staff members religious observance, the wearing of a bangle, necklace or a ring must be discrete. In addition no long necklaces or dangling earrings for pierced ears should be worn in areas where patients may be confused or violent or there is the risk of contact with machinery.</p> <p>In clinical areas, all hand jewellery inclusive of wristwatches, charity bracelets and rings (except plain bands) should be removed prior to handwashing. DOH Guidelines 2007</p>	<p>Jewellery may pose a health & safety risk. Rings, even wedding bands have been found to attract microorganisms. Rings with stones are hazardous and can scratch patients; the stones may become dislodged. Jewellery that is hanging e.g. a necklace, could potentially be dangerous with a confused or violent patient or when working with machinery.</p> <p>To minimise risk of injury and to minimise cross infection.</p>

Further reading and reference:

Moving and Handling Guidelines (East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust)

Infection Control Policy (East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust)

Infection Control Prevention of healthcare-associated infections in primary and community care , June 2003

Nursing and Midwifery Council Code of Professional Conduct

The Royal College of Nursing Report 2005

Behaviours & Rituals in the Operating Theatre, a report from the Hospital Infection Society Working Group on Infection Control in Operating Theatres 2001

Uniforms and Work wear: An Evidence Base for Developing Local Policy, Department of Health, 2007

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Appendix 1

WHO WEARS WHAT?

Matrons – Grey dress/tunic, black trousers, black cardigan, black shoes.

Nurse Specialists (who are required to or choose to wear a uniform)/Senior Midwives /Practice Development Nurse/Nurse Educators/Site Co-ordinators (i.e. all clinical nursing staff) - Navy blue dress white piping, navy belt or navy blue tunic and trousers, navy cardigan, black shoes

Ward Managers/Deputies – Navy blue dress white piping, navy belt/ Navy tunic and navy trousers, black shoes.

Staff Nurses /Staff Midwives - blue striped dress, blue belt or blue striped tunic, navy trousers, blue cardigan, black shoes.

Paediatric Nursing Staff (except matrons)
Child 'friendly' tunics, with grade specific trousers, black shoes.

Assistant Practitioner (nursing) – white dresses, white belt or white tunic, black trousers, black cardigan, black shoes.

HCA's/MCA's/assistant practitioners (including technicians) – white dresses, white belt or white tunic, black trousers, black cardigan, black shoes.

Male HCA's/ Assistant practitioner – white tunic and grey/black trousers, black shoes

Dieticians - Pale blue polo shirt or blouse, navy/black trousers or skirt, black shoes.

Physiotherapists – White tunic with navy blue trim, navy blue trousers or tailored shorts (June - September only). Navy blue sweatshirt or cardigan, black shoes or trainers – see main policy section on footwear.

Physiotherapy Assistants - Aqua tunic with navy blue trim or jade polo shirt with navy blue trousers, navy blue sweatshirt or cardigan, black shoes or trainers – see section

Occupational Therapists - White tunic with bottle green trim and bottle green trousers or white dress with bottle green trim, bottle green cardigan or sweatshirt, black shoes or trainers –see main policy section on footwear.

Occupational Therapy Assistants - Aqua tunic with navy blue trim, navy blue trousers, navy blue sweatshirt or cardigan, black shoes or trainers – see *section 8, footwear*.

Dental Nurses
White dress/tunic with yellow piping, yellow belt, Navy trousers, navy cardigan, black shoes.

RADIOGRAPHY

Radiographer Female - White tunic/dress with maroon piping, maroon cardigan and black trousers, black shoes

Radiographer Male - White tunic with maroon piping and epaulette, black trousers, black shoes.

Radiographer Helper- HCA/MCA Uniform

Assistant Radiographer Practitioners - White tunic/dress with maroon piping, maroon cardigan and black shoes trousers

Nuclear Medicine Technologists - Dress code plus white coat.

Medical Physicists - Dress code plus white coat.

Mammographers - As Radiographers

Nurses: As per Trust uniform policy

PATHOLOGY

Phlebotomists – White tunic with red trim with black trousers or skirt, black shoes

Receptionists – Dress code plus white coats in designated 'dirty' area.

Laboratory Staff – Dress code plus white coats.

Cytologist/Hystologist – White tunic with grey trousers.

Mortuary staff – 'blues' plus white coat if leaving the department

NHS PROFESSIONALS

Trained staff – White tunic (women's open collar and neck, men's button high at neck), black trousers. Pale blue scrubs (unisex) for theatre areas, black shoes.

Untrained staff – White tunic top women's open collar and neck, men's button high at neck), grey trousers. 'Scrubs' (unisex) for theatre areas, black shoes.

ADMIN and CLERICAL

***Receptionists/Ward Clerks:** *(All Trust departments including Radiological Services, OPD, Medical Records).* Where a uniform is provided or staff choose to purchase their own, the following must be adhered to:

Male & Female – Mid blue or white blouse/shirt (short sleeved).

Black or navy trousers or skirt (minimum knee length)

Shoes should comply with dress code guidance.

***Admin & Clerical Staff Male & Female:**

Mid blue or white blouse/shirt (short sleeved)

Black or navy trousers or skirt (minimum knee length)

Shoes should comply with dress code guidance.

*Not all staff working in these roles has a Trust supplied uniform due to funding constraints, staff in these areas should comply with the dress code guidance.

PHARMACY

Female Assistants & Technicians

White tunics with maroon and green piping and green pharmacy emblem on right breast, black trousers or black skirt (knee length), socks or natural/black coloured tights/stockings to be worn, optional during summer months (June to September), black cardigan, black shoes.

Male Assistants & Technicians

White tunics with green pharmacy emblem on right breast, black trousers, dark socks, black sweatshirt with green pharmacy emblem on right breast.

Storekeepers

Bottle green polo shirt, black sweatshirt with green pharmacy emblem on right breast optional, black trousers, dark safety shoes – to conform to EN345 200.

Pharmacists

Either as uniforms for technicians' male/female

OR

Dress Code policy compliance

Approved areas for the wearing of pale blue scrubs:

Special care baby unit

Endoscopy

Outpatients - where diagnostic or therapeutic interventions are carried out, Please do not remain in your operating department blues once you have completed your interventions, you are required to change back into your own clothes. If you are called away at short notice or need to attend an emergency elsewhere in the hospital this is accepted but 'blues' should not be worn as general attire.

Accident and Emergency

Heart centre

Sterile services department

Mortuary

Theatre blues **MUST NOT** be worn outside of the acute hospital buildings i.e. to get from the hospital to any residential buildings, or to travel to and from work. *Staff who are seen to be wearing theatre blues whilst shopping etc will be considered to have significantly breached this policy. All operating theatre blues should be laundered centrally at the WHH laundry. No home laundering is acceptable.*