

Learning Accord Multi Academy Trust

Staff Dress Code Policy



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The academy's reputation within both its immediate locality and the wider educational community is vitally important. It is appreciated that this reputation is based not only on formal academic achievement but also on a broader impression created by the appearance and behaviour of the academy's staff and students.
- 1.2 Accordingly, it has been felt appropriate to set out a formal code by which the academy can ensure that all employees, whilst free to dress in accordance with their own wishes (unless this causes detriment to their capacity to do their job or is deemed unsafe or inappropriate for some other valid reason), are nonetheless fully aware of the desired standards of dress and appearance.
- 1.3 The academy accepts that, in the absence of a uniform code, all members of staff have an entitlement, as above, to choose what they wear and how they appear. However, their appearance must always reflect their status as role models to the students and it is therefore incumbent upon all employees to present themselves in a professional manner not only at work within the school grounds but on all occasions when they are representing the academy in any capacity whatsoever.
- 1.4 The following principles are designed to take full account of sensitivities based on culture and religion. They are not unduly prescriptive, neither are they (nor can they be) exhaustive in defining what may or may not be deemed acceptable (or unacceptable) standards of dress and appearance and accordingly must be interpreted with a modicum of common sense.

2. Purpose and scope

- 2.1 It is acknowledged that the ethos of the academy can only be enhanced by ensuring that certain standards of dress and appearance are maintained, thus encouraging an environment conducive to learning and tolerance whilst promoting self-esteem.
- 2.2 All staff are expected to dress in accordance with their designated role in all circumstances. Accordingly, this code of conduct differentiates between the various types of activity that staff members may be required to perform in the course of their employment, not only in their substantive role but also when they may be representing the academy at parents' evenings, sports events, presentations etc.
- 2.3 This code will be interpreted throughout with attention to the overriding requirements of health and safety, particularly with relevance to the workplace.

3. Aims and objectives

- 3.1 The academy's dress code is intended to reinforce the ethos of the establishment. It is designed to promote the core values of the academy by encouraging staff to act as appropriate role models in relation to dress and appearance.
- 3.2 In addition, adherence to certain standards is encouraged as a means of ensuring that such issues do not become a potential focus for discord or conflict between staff and students.

4. Equality and diversity

- 4.1 The academy is fully conscious of its responsibilities in relation to appropriate treatment of matters pertaining to cultural and religious identity. Accordingly, the academy will always strive to act in a supportive manner when such sensibilities are involved.
- 4.2 Similar sensitivity will be observed in respect of any relevant matter of disability as and when this may be appropriate.
- 4.3 No relevant exceptions from the dress code on these grounds will, however, be permitted to compromise necessary adherence to issues of health and safety, security and/or other similar considerations of relevance.

5. Dress and appearance

- 5.1 All staff are expected to be appropriately and smartly dressed throughout, whilst bearing in mind that staff responsible for physical education/sport and those involved in teaching practical subjects must of course dress appropriately for instruction in such activities. However, it is expected that they will, at all other times when representing the academy, dress in a professional and responsible manner in accordance with this code.
- 5.2 Similarly, it is acknowledged and accepted that staff members involved in activities away from the premises of the academy (such as participation in field studies and trips of an educational nature) will be required to wear clothing appropriate to that specific activity.
- 5.3 The academy does not feel it necessary to identify a list of proscribed items of apparel or footwear, nor does it feel it appropriate to attempt to delineate acceptable (or unacceptable) types (or colours) of hairstyles, jewellery or piercings (although health and safety considerations will be deemed paramount in relation to all these categories). It does, however, expect that staff will refrain from dressing (or appearing) in an unprofessional manner or one which might be viewed as a distraction to students.
- 5.4 No display of provocative symbols or slogans (whether these be in the form of clothing, badges, tattoos or any other medium) which might reasonably be considered as having potential to cause offence will be tolerated under this code.
- 5.5 The academy is fully conscious of cultural and religious sensitivities and will always attempt to interpret the dress code with sympathy and empathy for such issues. Nonetheless it may, on rare occasions, be necessary to override such considerations in respect of issues of both effectiveness of teaching and health and safety which (as stated above) shall be paramount.
- 5.6 The above is in accordance with Department for Education guidance on this topic which states that '*Schools should be sensitive to the needs of different cultures, races and religions and act reasonably in accommodating these needs, without compromising important school policies, such as school safety or discipline.*'
- 5.7 Although legislation on this point is unclear (and case law remains uncertain) there is a long-standing convention that teaching staff within the classroom should be discouraged from wearing certain types of clothing (including the niqab) which obscure the greater part of the individual's face as this may impair the learning process to the significant disadvantage of students.
(Schools/academies may or may not wish to omit the above clause as it could be interpreted by some as provocative and enforcement might possibly be anticipated to be problematic.)
- 5.8 Occasional 'dress down' days may be held for specific purposes (such as charity fund-raising). These will be by agreement with the headteacher and will be advertised widely in advance. In such instances normal dress code may be assumed to be suspended

accordingly (although all staff should be mindful that even then they may be required to dress more professionally given the possibility that they are (or may be) required to meet with parents at short notice).

6. Breach of code

- 6.1 Should the appearance of any staff member be felt inconsistent with observation of the dress code this matter should immediately be brought to the attention of a member of the senior leadership team. If the latter is of the opinion that a breach of the dress code has been identified they will initially raise this matter with the individual involved to explain the precise area of concern.
- 6.2 Should there be any disagreement (due to interpretation of content or style) as to whether the code has been breached then this matter should be escalated to the attention of the headteacher, whose authority in these decisions is final.
- 6.3 The individual deemed to be in breach of the dress code may be requested to remove or change the offending item(s) of clothing, jewellery etc as appropriate. (It is accepted that this may necessitate the individual requiring to leave school premises to obtain suitable replacement clothing etc.)
- 6.4 Repeated (or wilful) breach of the dress code will be deemed a disciplinary matter and may be dealt with under formal disciplinary process.

7. Other policies and procedures

- 7.1 This policy will be supported by the following policies and procedures:
 - Disciplinary Policy