



CENTRAL SUSSEX COLLEGE

Dress Guidelines for Learners

Ref.
Effective

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dress (including clothing, footwear, hair style, jewellery, piercings and tattoos) is an important aspect of an individual's identity and discussion about appearance should at all times be conducted in a courteous and sensitive way. Careful and sensitive handling of issues linked to dress is part of the College's wider commitment to valuing diversity.

The purpose of these guidelines is to give advice about how potential contradictions between style of dress and other factors should be resolved.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The College supports diversity and respects individuals' freedom of choice in respect of their appearance. There are some over-riding factors, however, that may justify restrictions on dress in specific circumstances:

- **Health and safety requirements.** Detailed guidance on health and safety implications should be obtained from the Health and Safety Coordinator. However, the following general advice should be taken into account -
 - Clothing - safety or specialist clothing is sometimes required, and it should be worn when appropriate e.g. in food preparation or workshop areas.
 - Footwear – footwear must be appropriate to the location and specialist safety footwear may sometimes be required.
 - Jewellery and piercings - jewellery that cannot be removed (for religious or other reasons) may in some instances need to be concealed to comply with health and safety requirements.
 - Hair - when hair needs to be covered for food hygiene or safety reasons, turbans or hijabs are allowed instead of hair nets, but must be unadorned, shoulder-length and laundered daily. Hair, beards and moustaches may need to be kept tidy for health and safety reasons, and beard nets may need to be worn in some circumstances.
- **Decency.** Dress should conform to the current majority view in our society of what constitutes decency.
- **Reasonable requirements relating to compatibility of dress with duties or learning.** Some faculties may set local policies regarding dress for students on particular courses. There may also be circumstances where an employer (in a work-related learning situation) or the College makes a reasonable requirement that a particular form of dress or symbol is incompatible with undertaking effectively particular duties or learning. Examples might include situations where it is necessary easily to establish identity, or to see the face for another reason such as lip reading.
- **Offensive slogans.** Wearing slogans or symbols which constitute harassment (e.g. racist or sexist harassment) is not permitted, and may result in disciplinary action.

Where dress is incompatible with one or more of the factors mentioned above, learners may be asked to take action to remedy the situation e.g. to go home to change clothing; to tie back hair or to conceal the appropriate item(s). The Department of Student Support can be approached for advice about the appropriateness of dress.

3. GUIDELINES ON RELIGIOUS DRESS AND SYMBOLS

The wearing of religious dress or symbols is permitted and should not be banned or discouraged. A choice to wear religious dress and symbols should be respected, and should be upheld unless other over-riding factors come into play (see section 2 above). There are situations in which some compromise is needed. However, any restrictions must be justified, and should only be imposed where they are reasonable and necessary in the circumstances, and after appropriate consultation with the person affected.

In relation to the wearing of the Sikh Kirpan, the College will adopt the following principles-

- There should be no objection to the practice of wearing the five Ks, including the Kirpan. Guru Gobind Singh, the founder of the Khalsa (brotherhood of Sikhs), instructed its members to wear five special signs to show that they were Sikhs. Known as the five Ks these signs are: Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (comb), Kara (steel wristband), Kaccha (short trousers or underpants) and Kirpan (sword). Each sign has a particular significance. Wearing all of the five Ks is an integral part of being an initiated Sikh, but non-initiated Sikhs may wear all or some of the five Ks, for example, the steel Kara. Students are likely to feel offended if they are unreasonably instructed to remove one of the Ks that they are wearing, e.g. the Kara, although their feelings will vary according to how strongly they feel about their religious belief and identity.
- Students who wish to wear the Kirpan while attending the College should inform Student Support at the earliest opportunity, to prevent any misunderstandings arising. If appropriate, the College reserves the right to ask parents or religious leaders to authorise the wearing of the Kirpan by confirming that a young person has been initiated into the Khalsa by receiving amrit and is therefore expected to wear the five Ks at all times.
- During sport, and where necessary, other physical or practical activities, it is reasonable for staff to ask students to remove or conceal one or more of the five Ks if this is necessary to ensure the health and safety of the wearer and/or others. Students will be expected to hand the K (e.g. Kirpan or Kara) to a teacher or lecturer, or place it in an agreed secure place, e.g. a locker. Sikhs wearing turbans are exempt from the requirement to wear safety helmets on construction sites (Employment Act 1989 c38 s11).

The College will take steps to inform the College community – students, staff, Corporation and parents/carers - of the significance of the five Ks and to inform them of these principles.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

These guidelines take into account recommended best practice, a summary of which can be found in the '[Dress Guidelines for Learners - background information](#)', available online or from the Equality and Diversity Officer.

Signed: _____ A Dodwell _____ Date: 14 June 2010 _____
Executive Director 14-19 & Learner Services