



Professional Presentation Guidelines

Background

Between June 2008 and July 2009 I undertook a survey with children, young people, parents, staff, students and Board members involved with Multi-Cultural Family Base. The focus was to gain information on how they thought members of staff, students and volunteers should dress for work and any issues which they thought arose from this. The results suggested two main issues:

1. The information collected indicated that staff, students and volunteers should dress appropriately and avoid very tight, short or revealing clothes.
2. Staff, students and volunteers to consider the safety issues which may arise from their mode of dress.

These guidelines were constructed from the survey results and a copy of all the questionnaires and feedback is available (see Office Manager).

Multi-Cultural Family Base celebrates and values the diversity of its staff, students and service users and aims to create an environment where the identity, cultural, religious and non-religious or similar philosophical beliefs of all are respected. The organization strives to create a positive environment through education and awareness raising of personal choice, culture, traditions and religion or similar philosophical beliefs and will actively promote tolerance within the organization. Multi-Cultural Family Base imposes no dress code on its staff, students or volunteers, and welcomes the variety of appearance brought by individual styles and choices. The wearing of items arising from particular cultural/religious norms e. g. hijab, kippah, cross, mangal sutra, is seen as part of this welcome diversity.

However, the above research suggests that guidance on clothing which is appropriate for our professional role would be welcome. Multi-Cultural Family Base has compiled these guidelines which aim to provide staff and students with guidance about what is appropriate work wear. Because not all casual clothing is suitable for work with children, young people and their families, these guidelines will help you determine what is appropriate to wear to work.

In a casual work setting, staff, students and volunteers can wear clothing that is comfortable and practical for work, while taking into account that you may be required to:

- Unexpectedly attend a professional meeting where you will be a representative of the organisation.
- Undertake a visit to the home of a black or minority ethnic family who may have specific religious and cultural beliefs and expectations in relation to modes of dress.
- Undertake 'duty slots' at the front desk where you may be the first point of contact for the organisation.

Clothing that works well for social and leisure pursuits may not be appropriate for a professional appearance at work. Clothing that reveals too much cleavage, your back, your chest, your stomach or your underwear is not appropriate in your professional role with children, young people and their families.

All staff members, volunteers, and students at MCFB are expected to work with our mission and values and therefore the wearing of any slogan or symbol which is discriminatory, e.g. racist, sexist, sectarian, is unacceptable.

While we recognize the right of every member of staff, student and volunteer to celebrate their identity and uniqueness, the potential impact of, for instance, tattoos or body piercings on the children, young people and families you are working with should be considered.

Some religions and beliefs require their followers to wear certain items of jewellery or have certain markings on their skin. For example, in addition to wearing a wedding ring, many Hindu women wear a necklace (Mangal Sutra) which is placed around their neck during the wedding ceremony and is highly symbolic and the organization will respect these beliefs.

Clothing including footwear should be appropriate to the planned activities of the day, therefore flip flop shoes would not be considered safe for certain activities but jeans and wellington boots may.

The organization would ask all members of staff, students and volunteers to adopt a common sense approach to interpreting these guidelines.

Lorraine Grady
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