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Applicability: All DDSN Employees

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I. POLICY

It is the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) objective to establish a dress code which allows employees to work comfortably in their various work places, but to maintain and project a professional image. Employee dress should be neat in appearance and consistent with a business-like atmosphere, keeping in mind the impression made on other employees, customers, and visitors.

DDSN reserves the right to ensure that a proper businesslike appearance is maintained by all employees, and that individual attire preferences do not disrupt or negatively affect the work

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environment. Employees are encouraged to consult with their supervisor whenever necessary regarding acceptable dress for their work area.

It is the responsibility of each employee to use sound judgment and observe proper dress code requirements at all times. Failure to observe this policy could result in the employee being sent home and/or disciplinary action.

II. GUIDELINES

Clothing:

All clothing must be consistent with the standards of a professional environment and not attract undue attention or serve as a distraction to others. Clothing should be clean and reflect a high standard of personal hygiene.

Clothing must allow for bending, stooping, lifting, moving, and other physical activity without compromising safety or modesty.

Acceptable Business Casual Attire:

- Blazers or sport coats;
- Collared shirt, golf shirt, polo shirt blouses or sweaters;
- Dresses, casual dress pants, slacks, loafers with socks, and dress sandals;
- Shorts (must be no more than two (2) inches above the knee) (applicable to DDSN Regional Center direct care staff).

Unacceptable Attire:

The following standards are to be used as a guideline for what is to be considered improper attire on any day. Unless, approved by a supervisor for a specific day or activity.

The following clothing items are examples of prohibited clothing:

- Denim of any type, except on casual Fridays, unless otherwise announced (applicable to non-DDSN Regional Center direct care staff)
- Dresses, and skirts shorter than two (2) inches above the knees (applicable to DDSN Regional Center direct care staff);
- Crop tops, tank tops, strapless or thin strapped garments of any type (unless worn under a jacket/blazer, sweater or shirt);
- Halter tops;
- See-through clothing of any kind;
- Mesh tee shirts;
- Short shorts, hot pants, etc.;
- Low cut blouses/dresses;
- Faddish clothes (including, but not limited to, mini-skirts, cut-up jeans);

- Spandex and/or bicycle pants;
- Low hip hugging pants;
- Low hanging pants;
- Leggings/yoga pants or tights without a mid-thigh length top;
- Pajamas;
- Tee strap tops/dresses;
- T-shirts, sport jerseys or sweatshirts (applicable to non-DDSN Regional Center direct care staff)
- Head bonnets, head scarfs, bandanas, baseball caps and hats;
- Unsuitable clothing that disrupts the normal course of business and does not reflect a positive or professional image.

Clothing appropriate for a specific activity may be worn by staff when participating in the activity (on/off-campus activity, ex. a trip to the beach, May Fest, etc.) Female staff that are assigned to a DDSN Regional Center pool area must wear a one-piece bathing suit and male staff should wear a thigh length swim trunk. Clothing appropriate for a DDSN Regional Center campus, per the policy, must be worn when leaving the pool area.

Acceptable Casual Friday Attire (Applicable to Non-DDSN Regional Center Direct Care Staff):

DDSN observes casual Friday dress when permissible. Denim jeans and athletic shoes should not be worn Mondays through Thursdays unless prior approval is given by the supervisor. Examples of special supervisory exceptions may include, but are not limited to, office moves, participation in special wellness/employee activities and events, or incidents of hazardous or emergency weather.

Fridays have been designated as a causal dress day for non-uniformed staff members. Casual dress is a privilege that is offered to provide a more relaxed work atmosphere. Casual Fridays may be revoked for an individual, a unit or department if the guidelines set forth are not adhered to. Denim jeans should be clean, neat, not faded and without rips or tears.

Staff members should not dress in casual attire on Fridays if they have a meeting that requires business attire. Casual Friday dress may be extended to other days when involved in setting up displays, fair exhibits, etc.

Personal Hygiene:

Heavy perfume and cologne may be prohibited due to sensitivity (allergies, illness) of employees and/or visitors.

Shoes:

Shoes must allow for foot protection and response to emergency situations. Staff must wear shoes with the toes enclosed. Any employee engaged in any type of hazardous or specialized duty may be required to wear clothing and footwear appropriate to the hazardous or specialized

duty as determined by the appointing authority or designee (applicable to DDSN Regional Center direct support staff).

Non direct care staff can wear heels and sandals in the office area. The heels must be block (large) style and not to exceed two and a half (2½) inches in height (applicable to DDSN Regional Center staff).

The following shoes are prohibited:

- Spike heels (high heels, tiny heels, narrow heels over two (2) inches in height) (applicable to DDSN Regional Center staff);
- Bedroom shoes/slippers;
- Flip flops;
- Beach shoes;
- Mesh slip-ons.

Shoes appropriate for a specific activity may be worn by staff when participating in the activity (on/off-campus activity, a trip to the beach, May Fest, etc.) Shoes appropriate for DDSN Regional Center pool areas may be worn by pool staff in the pool area only. Shoes appropriate for a DDSN Regional Center campus must be worn when staff leaves the pool area.

Work Uniforms (Applicable to DDSN Regional Center Staff):

All staff members who are assigned uniforms must wear them while working. Uniforms should be clean, neatly pressed and in good condition when reporting to work. If the required uniform is unavailable for any reason (new or temporary employees), staff members are expected to comply with the general requirements for all staff members, as well as departmental guidelines that may be available for such circumstances.

Non-uniform staff members:

All non-uniform staff members are expected to wear standard business casual attire, except those whose jobs involve dressing for safety.

Fingernails:

Fingernails must be clean, filed, and trimmed. For direct care, nursing staff, and those who serve in a support services role (Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, etc.) fingernail length is not to exceed 1/8 inch beyond the tip of the fingers and artificial nails are prohibited.

Jewelry (Applicable to DDSN Regional Center Direct Care Staff):

Only wedding rings, watches, and non-dangling smooth surface bracelets are allowed to be worn by staff at their own risk.

The following jewelry items are prohibited:

- dangling earrings
- dangling necklaces, bracelets, beads
- pins
- broaches
- costume/high setting rings with prongs

Body Piercing (Applicable to DDSN Regional Center Staff):

All body piercing that extends from the surface of the skin is prohibited (i.e., eyes, navel, eyebrows, nose, lips, etc.).

III. IDENTIFICATION BADGES (Applicable to DDSN Regional Center Staff):

Identification Badges are to be worn at all times and clearly visible.

IV. COMPLIANCE

- a. Compliance with this policy is the responsibility of each employee of the Department.
- b. Managers and supervisors are responsible for interpreting and enforcing dress and grooming standards in their areas of responsibility. This includes counseling employees whose appearance is inappropriate. Supervisors and managers are expected to strictly enforce the policy for their Division, Department, Unit and/or Team.
- c. When an employee's dress does not comply with established standards, the normal response should be to discuss the matter privately with the employee.
- d. Whether or not an employee will be sent home to change into more appropriate clothes will be at the discretion of the employee's supervisor. Employees sent home will be expected to submit annual leave or arrange to make up the missed time at work.
- e. Reasonable accommodation will be made for employee's religious beliefs and/or disabilities whenever possible, consistent with business necessity to present a professional appearance to the public.
- f. Repeated policy violations may result in disciplinary action.
- g. Direct care and nursing staff must be in compliance at all times due to on-going consumer contact. Non-direct care staff must follow this policy as written whenever outside of the office area (i.e., on campus, program area, living area, etc.).

New Employees will be trained on this procedure during pre-service training. This policy is to be used as a guideline and may not be all inclusive. Any questions related to this policy should be directed to Human Resources.



Elizabeth Lemmond
Human Resource Director
(Originator)



Mary Poole
State Director
(Approved)

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