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**POLICY: EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:** Each employee is expected to dress appropriately for the job. Douglas Cherokee Economic Authority Head Start/Early Head Start employees are role models for parents and are considered professionals in the field of early childhood development and care. Supervisors and employees are responsible for following appropriate dress standards.

**OPERATING PROCEDURE:**

In following dress standards, supervisors and employees should consider these factors:

1. The nature of the work.
2. Work activities planned for the day.
3. Safety considerations, such as necessary precautions when working in the kitchen, driving a bus, or making home visits.
4. The nature of the employee's public contact and the normal expectations of outside parties with whom the employee will work with. School system personnel, doctors, dentists, mental health care providers, physical therapists, speech/language therapists, and community/civic leaders are considered professionals and a more formal style of dress should be worn on days with public contact.

**Guidelines**

1. Informal dress is acceptable for day-to-day activities in the center. A more formal style is preferred when meeting with the public, professionals, or staff from other agencies. **EHS** classroom and kitchen staff are asked to wear scrub tops.
2. Clothes should be neat, clean, and ironed when necessary.
3. Clothing should fit appropriately. Clothing that is too tight or loose not only looks inappropriate, it is uncomfortable, displays an unprofessional image to parents and the public, and can be a safety hazard to children and employees.
4. Hemlines for skirts and shorts (when approved) should not go more than two (2) inches above the knee when standing.
5. Low-cut shirts or high split skirts should not be worn. Low-cut clothing can be offensive to the parents and public.
6. Shoes should be neat, clean, and have non-skid soles. Tennis shoes are acceptable as long as they are neat, clean, and look appropriate with clothing items. **EHS Infant Rooms** have a no shoes policy. Classroom staff will wear

booties that cover their shoes or slippers for classroom use only. All staff, visitors, and parents that enter the Infant classrooms and step beyond the designated meet/greet area near the door will be asked to put booties over their shoes. **Maintenance staff** should wear shoes that are appropriate to the job task. No crepe soled shoes should be worn in the classroom or kitchen.

7. Jewelry can pose a safety hazard to children and staff. It should only be worn in moderation with consideration to everyday duties required by your job.
8. Personal hygiene is just as important as dress. Employees should be clean with hair groomed, no offensive body odors, and wear appropriate under garments.

### **Restrictions**

1. Sandals, open-toed shoes, high heels, and shoes with slick or "chunky" soles should not be worn in the classroom, the kitchen, or on the bus. Shoes of this nature are considered a safety hazard to staff and children.
2. Spandex, sweat suites (fleece), or other forms of exercise clothing are not permitted.
3. Tee shirts should be free of any logo, design, or wording that promotes alcohol or tobacco; are sexual in nature by wording or design; or promotes discrimination based on ethnic background, gender, or religion. Tee shirts of this nature will not be tolerated.
4. Male employees are not to remove their shirts when working outdoors or indoors. This is a safety hazard and is also offensive to staff, children, parents, and to the public.
5. Offensive tattoos should be covered when in the presence of children, staff members, or the public.
6. **EHS** classroom staff are not to wear dresses or skirts on days that they are primarily in the classroom.
7. **EHS** classroom and kitchen staff are not allowed to wear false fingernails or fingernail polish of any kind/style. Excessively long nails are not allowed.
8. **EHS** has a no fragrance policy. ALL EHS staff will refrain from wearing scented sprays or perfumes, which can be harmful/irritable to infants' respiratory systems and are considered allergens.

### **Exceptions**

1. Shorts may be worn on field trips only for part-day/part-year staff or during the summer month operations for full-day/full-year staff. Hemlines are to remain no more than two (2) inches above the knee.
2. Nylon or satin style wind suites are permitted during the winter months for bus drivers, Teacher assistants, or other staff members that are required to drive or ride the bus. Wind suites should only be worn on the days the employee is actually driving or riding the bus.
3. If you think protective clothing or safety equipment should be provided for a job task that you are assigned to, discuss it with your component supervisor.

### **Suggested Guidelines by Position**

### **Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Child Care Aides & Special Service Assistants**

- Slacks, proper fitting blue jeans, or skirt with a nice shirt. Shoes should be non-skid. **EHS** – scrub tops instead of or over their shirt; slacks, proper fitting blue jeans, or scrub bottoms (preferred); booties over their shoes.

### **Bus Drivers**

- Slacks or proper fitting blue jeans with a nice shirt. Skirts are not recommended for driving the bus or doing pre-trip inspections. Shoes should be non-skid.

### **Central Office, FSWs, and Supervisors**

- Slacks or skirts with a nice shirt. High heels or conservative sandals can be worn in environments where contact with children or time in the center kitchen is limited. Conservative clothing is always best when doing home visits or meeting other professionals.

### **Cooks and Cook Assistants**

- Slacks or skirts with a conservative shirt. Clothing should not present a safety hazard. Employees that work in the kitchen are exposed to lifting, bending, standing long periods, and temperature variations. Shoes should be non-skid and comfortable. **EHS** – scrub tops instead of or over their shirt; slacks, proper fitting blue jeans, or scrub bottoms (preferred).

### **Discipline**

Disciplinary action will be in accordance to Section 17 of the DCEA Personnel Policies Manual. The steps below should be followed when disciplinary action is necessary.

1. Documented Warning (Verbal or Written)
2. Written Reprimand
3. Suspension or Disciplinary Probation
4. Dismissal

Employees found breaking the dress code may be asked by their immediate supervisor to go home and change clothes without pay. This should only be used in situations when the clothing is found to be offensive or presents a safety hazard.