

Reviewed on:	September 2025
Reviewed by:	Alison Goode
Date of next review:	September 2027



Staff Dress Code Policy

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Purpose

At Exceptional Ideas Ltd., we understand how vital it is for our school to provide safe, welcoming environments for both students and staff. A thoughtful and inclusive dress code is essential not only to maintain professionalism, a calming and welcoming environment, and comfort, but also to meet our legal duties in safeguarding and health and safety.

This policy is informed by the following legal parameters:

- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** – Employers have a duty of care to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of all employees at work. This includes reducing risks associated with unsafe or unsuitable clothing and footwear.
- **Equality Act 2010** – Dress codes must not discriminate on the grounds of protected characteristics such as age, sex, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. Our approach seeks to be inclusive and respectful of individual identity and cultural expression.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025** – Schools have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Staff presentation contributes to creating safe, positive, and professional learning environments where students feel respected and cared for.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)** – Emphasises the importance of professionalism and the role of all adults in modelling safe and appropriate behaviours for children.

The purpose of this policy is to set out clear expectations regarding appropriate clothing and footwear, balancing staff comfort and individuality with safety, professionalism, and the therapeutic needs of our students.

Clothing expectations

Staff should adopt a semi-smart casual dress that includes clothing that supports:

- Cultural and religion
- Gender expression and personal style
- Individuality while keeping things professional
- Comfort and that allows for a range of movement during the working day

Staff should wear clothing that is not offensive to others. Therefore, staff should not wear:

- Revealing clothing i.e. lowcut tops, tops with string or spaghetti straps, mini-skirts, hotpants, clothing with large rips or tears that exposes large areas of skin.

- Offensive slogans and / or pictures

Clothing with offensive slogans and/or images – This includes any wording, symbols, logos, or pictures that could be considered discriminatory, threatening, or inappropriate in a school environment. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Language or imagery that is racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or otherwise discriminatory.
- References to drugs, alcohol, violence, or illegal activities.
- Sexual or suggestive content.
- Political statements that may cause offence or distress.
- Profanity or other inappropriate language.

Such clothing is not permitted, as it conflicts with the school's safeguarding duties and commitment to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment.

Footwear expectations

Staff should wear shoes that are intact, comfortable and appropriate for both restraint practices and the activities and lessons that they are taking part in on that day e.g. trainers or waterproof boots.

Staff should not wear shoes that are unsafe; this includes:

- high-heeled shoes
- Slip-on shoes with no back straps

Open-toed shoes may only be worn by staff working exclusively in non-student-facing roles (e.g. administration) where there is no risk of physical intervention or outdoor activity. For all staff working directly with students, open-toed shoes are not permitted for health and safety reasons.

Examples of Appropriate Clothing

Acceptable day-to-day clothing includes jogging bottoms, jeans, trousers, knee-length shorts, skirts, dresses, T-shirts, and sweatshirts. Where staff choose to wear a dress or skirt that may ride up or affect modesty during movement, physical activity, or restraint, leggings or shorts should also be worn underneath. This is not intended to restrict personal style but to ensure comfort, professionalism, and safeguarding in a range of situations.

Jewellery should be kept to a minimum and should not present a risk of injury, either by becoming caught on objects or being pulled during activities.

For PE or other active sessions, staff should wear a tracksuit/jogging suit and trainers in good condition. Clothing should allow for free movement and stretching, enabling safe participation in a full range of physical activities.

Formal Meetings

While day-to-day dress is designed to be informal and comfortable to reduce barriers for students, staff should remain mindful that their appearance reflects the professionalism of the school. In particular, when attending formal meetings with external stakeholders (such as social workers, local authority staff, or parents), staff are expected to consider the context and dress appropriately to maintain the school's professional reputation.

Clothing for wet and cold weather

Staff should be equipped for both hot and cold weather to ensure that outdoor activities can continue in all conditions. This includes waterproof coats, appropriate footwear such as wellington boots, and in summer, sun protection such as hats and sunblock. Staff are expected to be prepared to work outside alongside students regardless of weather conditions.

Sharing of policy to parents

This policy is shared on the school website; Exceptional Ideas Ltd. to ensure transparency and to support mutual understanding of the school's professional expectations.

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