

Attire and Grooming Policy

Within Western societies, the school system is known to play an important part in the socialization process. It is customary for schools to have an attire and grooming policy. The enforcement of this leads to instilling a level of discipline in the minds of students. This forms part of the students' preparation for entry into the world of work. Students are to be made aware of the appropriateness of their appearance, particularly where they wear school uniform.

The attire and grooming policy focuses on their overall appearance which extends to include clothing, hair styles, make up worn by female students, foot wear and hygiene. It is common place that students are debarred from wearing tattoos. These have become accepted standards, which in the main have remained unchallenged. For example, the school instills in its students that there is a standard of dress and general deportment that is required when attending a job interview. It is more the norm to find that individuals would report for a job interview appropriately dressed.

Within the world of work, whether in the public or private sector, standards of deportment and discipline are common features. All professional organizations establish a Code of Ethics, which invariably addresses all such related issues. Some of the professionals that are known to work under a Code of Ethics which governs their general conduct include teachers, nurses, doctors, fire officers, police officers, soldiers, prison officers and attorneys at law; just to name a few.

The matter of attire for Public Officers and employees was cited in the Revised Edition (1997) of the General Orders of Barbados, Section 3.34.1 (Dress on the Job), which reads:

"Officers and Employees are required to dress soberly, tidily and in keeping with the requirements of the job and having regard for the desirability of maintaining a standard of attire consistent with the dignity of the Public Service. The suitability of any particular form of

dress to the requirements of the office should be determined at the discretion of the Head of Department."

The Second Schedule of the Public Service Act, 2007-41, Section 17 (1) and 17 (2) specifically addressed the subject of dress.

Section 17 (1) "Officers are while on duty, required to dress soberly, neatly and tidily and in accordance with the requirements of the job, having regard to the desirability of maintaining standards of attire consistent with the dignity of the Public Service"

Section 17 (2) "The suitability of any particular form of dress to the requirements of the office should be determined by the Head of Department in consultation with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Civil Service, but should not be contrary to the provision of subparagraph (1).

The matter of the wearing of uniforms was also addressed in the Revised Edition (1997) of the General Orders of Barbados, Section 3.34.2. It reads:

"Officers and employees who are provided with uniforms shall wear such uniforms at all times when on duty. A breach of this Order shall render the officer or employee liable to disciplinary action."

This provision serves to promote the taking of pride by public sector officers and employees in the wearing of their uniform.

It must be stressed that the suitability of the attire worn on the job is a key factor that stands out. This should not however be taken to mean that there is latitude to fall below what is expected. There is no excuse for blatant untidiness in the appearance of any worker, or for the excessive decoration or out languished mode of dress and appearance that calls attention to the individual.

The highest standard is expected of those who wear a uniform, irrespective of the fact that they are public or private sector employees. Any despicable form of dress is certainly to have a

reflection on the corporate image of the organization or enterprise. Employees should be conscious of the fact that the wearing of the uniform should not be placed in the mould of making a fashion statement, where the trend is to identify with the latest styles, fashions and other practices.