



FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

LEONARD L. WILLIAMS JUSTICE CENTER
500 N. KING STREET, SUITE 9445
WILMINGTON, DE 19801-3703

400 COURT STREET
DOVER, DE 19901

22 THE CIRCLE
GEORGETOWN, DE 19947

MICHAEL K. NEWELL
CHIEF JUDGE

INTERNAL POLICY MEMORANDUM NO. 23-004

TO: Family Court Statewide
FROM: Michael K. Newell, Chief Judge 
DATE: December 18, 2023
RE: Dress Code Policy

This internal Policy Memorandum supersedes IPM 11-005 and 18-003. It is effective on **December 18, 2023**, and applies to all Family Court staff, casual/seasonal employees, volunteers, contractors, and interns/externs.

I. **SCOPE:**

It is essential, to ensure the successful operation of the Court's mission, that Family Court employees treat litigants with the utmost respect and that we exhibit a professional appearance that conveys competence, respect, dignity, and efficiency.

For many of the litigants who come before the Court, it may be their first experience with the judicial system, and the issues that face them are emotional and central to their lives as part of a family. Therefore, the conduct and professional appearance of Court employees conveys to the public our commitment to the public trust and confidence.

The standards herein regarding appropriate workplace dress are implemented to provide clarity and to minimize the differences in interpretation.

II. **POLICY:**

Employees are expected to follow the dress code policy at all times, including attendance at conferences and training sessions, unless given specific notice otherwise by the Chief Judge or his designee. While this Policy will attempt to include examples of both appropriate and inappropriate attire, these lists are not exhaustive. Employees are expected to exercise good judgment and discretion in their choice of attire. Exceptions may be made for special "dress-down" day celebrations or if there is a valid medical reason and documentation of such valid medical condition has been provided to Human Resources.

III. **DRESS CODE:**

1. Business Casual attire is permitted for non-uniformed employees.

2. **Acceptable Business Casual Attire:**

- Dresses;
- Jumpers;
- Skirts of an appropriate length (no more than two (2) inches above the knee);
- Pants; and
- Polo shirts (including polo shirts with Family Court seal), or other collared shirts. Shirts may not contain any printing, advertising, or slogans; however, brand symbols are permitted. Solid colors and patterns as well as long or short sleeves are permitted. Shirts must be tucked into trousers for male employees.

3. **Acceptable Casual Attire:** (Permitted **Only** on Assigned Casual Dress Days)

Casual attire is permitted for non-uniformed employees every Friday. When a holiday falls on a Friday, the Thursday preceding the holiday will be a casual dress day. The Wednesday preceding Thanksgiving will be a casual dress day.

- Jeans that are free of rips, holes and tears and athletic footwear so long as they are clean and in presentable condition; and
- Tee-shirts without slogans, phrases, or images (unless it is specific to a themed event – by way of example: sports teams; prevent child abuse; or domestic violence prevention).
- Non-hooded sweatshirts with the Family Court logo.

4. **Unacceptable Attire:**

- Tight and/or revealing¹ clothing, including leggings not worn under a dress or skirt, yoga pants, jeggings, low cut, or see through clothing, and any clothing that exposes the midriff, or the back;
- Spaghetti straps;
- Skirts with high slits;
- Clothing printed with slogans or phrases, except as noted above;
- Tee shirts or tank tops;
- Sweatshirts, sweatpants, or exercise clothing;

¹ Revealing clothing is defined as clothes that show more of the body than is acceptable in a professional place of business. This can include things such as sheer or see through fabrics or low cut tops in addition to other items mentioned in this policy.

- Shorts;
- Overalls, or painter's pants; and
- Thong sandals², shower shoes, slippers, Crocs, flip-flops or other plastic or rubber sandals without backs;
- Baseball hats;
- Tie dyed or camouflage apparel;
- Untucked flannel shirts

5. **Judicial Assistants and Court Security Officers:**

➤ **Acceptable Business Attire:**

- JAs and CSOs and any other employees who are required to wear uniforms shall maintain the required attire so as to be neat and clean in appearance at all times and ensure uniformity in appearance so the public and our stakeholders can readily identify security personnel in our courthouses.

➤ **Acceptable Casual Attire:**

Casual Attire is extended to and permitted for uniformed employees every Friday. When a holiday falls on a Friday, the Thursday preceding the holiday will be a casual dress day. The Wednesday preceding Thanksgiving will be a casual dress day. Casual attire is also permitted while attending training. Casual shirts are **mandatory** during these and any other designated casual days.

- Court issued casual (Polo) shirts;
- Court issued uniform pants

6. **Good Grooming:**

All employees are expected to practice good grooming and personal hygiene. Clothing should be neat and clean. Cologne, perfume, and aftershave should be subtle. Clothing should routinely reflect a professional and businesslike appearance as opposed to a casual appearance.

IV. **EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Each employee is personally responsible to meet the Court's expectations for their personal appearance on a daily basis. Any corrective or disciplinary action relating to the provisions of this dress code shall be in keeping with the Judicial Branch Rules, where applicable, the Collective Bargaining Agreement and Court practices and standards of

² Thong sandals are defined as anything with a toe-piece attached to a V-shaped strap that goes between the first and second toe and the majority of the foot is showing.

performance and conduct. All appropriate discussion, counseling, and corrective action (including verbal and written warnings) or other disciplinary action regarding compliance with this policy is the responsibility of the immediate supervisor.

(PURSUANT TO INTERNAL POLICY MEMORANDUM NO. 23-004)

DRESS CODE POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Dress Code of Family Court of the State of Delaware.

Employee's Name (Please Print)

Employee's Signature

Date