




FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

MICHAEL K. NEWELL
CHIEF JUDGE

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

INTERNAL POLICY MEMORANDUM NO. 18-003

TO: Family Court Statewide
FROM: Michael K. Newell, Chief Judge 
DATE: October 29, 2018
RE: **Dress Code Policy**

This internal Policy Memorandum supersedes IPM 11-005. It is effective on **November 1, 2018** and applies to all Family Court staff, merit and non-merit employees, casual/seasonal employees, volunteers 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.

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;
 - 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. Casual attire is permitted for non-uniformed employees on the **third Friday** of each month.
4. **Acceptable Casual Attire:** (Permitted **Only** on Assigned Casual Dress Day)
 - Jeans and athletic footwear so long as they are clean and in presentable condition; and
 - Tee-shirts without slogans (unless it is specific to a themed event – by way of example: sports teams; prevent child abuse; or domestic violence prevention).
5. **Unacceptable Attire:**
 - Tight and/or revealing clothing, 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;
 - Tee shirts or tank tops;
 - Sweatshirts, sweatpants, or exercise clothing;
 - Shorts;
 - Overalls, or painter's pants; and
 - Thong sandals, shower shoes or flip-flops.

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

- 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.

7. **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 his or her 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 State of Delaware Merit Rules, where applicable, the Collective Bargaining Agreement and Court practices and standards of 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. 18-003)

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