

# CAROLINA FAMILY HEALTH CENTERS, INC. POLICY

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**TITLE:** HR-203 Dress Code

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**EFFECTIVE DATE:** February 1998

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**SECTION:** Human Resources

**REFERENCE PROCEDURE:** HR-203.01 Identification of Staff

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**RESPONSIBLE CHIEF OF STAFF:** Chief Operating Officer

**RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE:** Employee Investment CIT

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**REVIEWED:** 10/03, 06/06, 01/08, 05/13, 08/16, 04/25/2023, 12/9/2025

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## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to define and outline the standards regarding attire and personal appearance at Carolina Family Health Centers, Inc. (CFHC, Inc.) The standards are aimed to encourage both professionalism and safety in the workplace.

## **II. POLICY**

CFHC, Inc. employees contribute to the corporate culture and reputation in the way they present themselves. A professional appearance is essential to a favorable impression with customers, regulators, and company stakeholders.

This dress code policy covers all employees of CFHC, Inc., working on-site in company-owned facilities or off-site on company business. This policy also applies to contract staff, students, and volunteers (for the purposes of this policy, when the term employee or employees is used, it also includes contract staff, students, and volunteers).

In general, the approved dress code for employees is business casual. Staff with direct patient contact in clinical areas are allowed to wear medical/dental uniforms (i.e., scrubs). An employee's attire must be able to accommodate personal protective equipment or protective clothing, as needed or required for the job responsibilities. The last business day of each work week is designated as "Dress Down Day" where employees are allowed to dress in casual attire (more informal than the normal day-to-day business casual attire).

Employees are expected to present a neat appearance. Employees are not permitted to wear ripped, frayed, or disheveled clothing, nor are they permitted to wear athletic or lounge wear. Additionally, tight, revealing, or otherwise workplace-inappropriate dress is not permitted. Absolutely no political, sexually suggestive, inappropriate language or symbolism, or religious statements or ideology are allowed in the workplace on clothing, hair, or the skin.

Reasonable accommodations are made where required (unless the accommodation creates an undue hardship) and are reviewed on an individual basis (refer to *HR-103 Americans with Disabilities Act*).

Supervisors are responsible for enforcing the standards within this policy. Some of the standards outlined in this policy may be more subjective than others, leading to differences of opinion. These differences may be discussed with the Director of Human Resources. The Director of Human Resources, or his/her designee, has the final word on dress code compliance.

It is not possible to list every type of attire that may be inappropriate or violate the standards set forth in this policy. The examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive, and CFHC, Inc. reserves discretion to determine if attire meets organization expectations.

Any employee who does not meet the attire or personal appearance standards will be asked to leave the premises to change clothing or properly groom and return back to work. Non-exempt employees (i.e., hourly) will not be compensated for any work time missed because of failure to comply with this policy. Employees who repeatedly violate this policy will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination (refer to *HR-902 Corrective Action*).

CFHC, Inc. encourages employees to use common sense and sound judgment when it comes to selecting their attire. To assist employees with selection of attire and adherence to this policy, specific guidelines have been developed as follows:

### **Identification Badges**

Any employee involved in direct patient care is required to wear a company-approved identification badge in a visible area (above the waist) at all times. Employees working in administrative areas, where direct patient care does not occur, are not required to wear a company-approved identification badge. Employees working off-site or employees attending a meeting (either on-site or off-site) with non-employees must wear an identification badge.

CFHC, Inc. has chosen to adopt an exception to badge law requirements of regulatory authorities by allowing the use first name only for most identification badges for the safety and protection of employees. For additional information, refer to *HR-203.01 Identification of Staff*.

### **Hats**

Hats, head scarves, do-rags, mesh caps, or other head coverings are not allowed except in instances described below.

### **Outerwear**

Outdoor wear such as coats, jackets, gloves, sunglasses, and hats are acceptable only when worn outdoors and appropriate for the duties performed by the employee.

### **Head Phones**

The use of headphones, ear buds, or Bluetooth devices is not allowed. The only exceptions are devices which are authorized and purchased by CFHC, Inc. for business calls.

### **Hair**

Hair (including facial hair) should be clean, combed, and neatly trimmed or arranged. Hair should not present a distraction in the performance of the employee's job function or pose a

safety issue or hazard. Hair color should be within naturally occurring color tones (i.e., not green, purple, blue, or pink).

### **Personal Hygiene**

Employees are expected to maintain an acceptable level of bodily hygiene. Offensive perfumes, lotions, or body fragrances, or body odor is a violation of this policy.

### **Tattoos**

Tattoos are generally accepted in the workplace as long as the tattoo(s) do not violate other sections of this policy, and are not unprofessional or distracting. Tattoos on the face or neck are not allowed and must be covered when in the workplace.

### **Fingernails**

Artificial and natural fingernails should be clean, well-manicured, moderate in length, and appropriate for the workplace.

### **Jewelry**

Jewelry in pierced sites should be visible on the ear only. Nose, tongue, or any type of facial ring/stud is not acceptable in the workplace. The unallowable piercings must be covered, exchanged with clear/non-visible options, or removed during work hours. Jewelry selections should be conservative, made with restraint and realization that CFHC, Inc. is a professional healthcare environment.

### **Tops/Shirts**

Shirts with collars, business casual crewneck or V-neck shirts, blouses, and polo shirts are acceptable. Tops should cover the chest, back and abdomen during movements required of the employees' job duties. Spaghetti straps, strapless tops, halter tops, and t-straps may only be worn when a jacket or sweater covers the exposed body areas. Low-cut or excessively tight tops are not appropriate, regardless of the type of top/shirt. Company logo shirts and sweatshirts are permitted on all days of the week, but traditional t-shirts and sweatshirts are only allowed on Dress Down Day.

### **Pants/Jeans**

Casual slacks and trousers, including capri length, are appropriate. Skin-tight pants (such as jeggings, leggings, tights, yoga pants, etc.) are not considered pants and are only acceptable when worn under a skirt or dress of appropriate length. Shorts, bib overalls, sweatpants, or other athletic pants of any kind are not acceptable. Joggers, knit bottoms, or other lounge pants of any kind are not permitted. Denim pants or jeans (regardless of color) that adhere to the above standards are only allowed on Dress Down Day.

### **Skirts/Dresses**

Dress and skirt length must be no more than two (2) inches above the knee (this includes slit). Spaghetti strap or strapless dresses may be worn as long as a jacket or sweater covers the exposed body areas. Skorts of appropriate length are acceptable. Denim skirts or dresses (regardless of color) are only allowed on Dress Down Day.

**Medical/Dental Uniforms**

Staff with direct patient contact in clinical areas are allowed to wear medical/dental uniforms (i.e., scrubs). Clinical areas are defined as direct patient treatment areas in the medical and dental departments, pharmacy, home visits, and outreach activities (as outlined below).

Medical/dental uniforms are not appropriate for business or administrative staff, unless they are working in a clinical area as identified above.

**Undergarments**

Undergarments should not be visible above, below or through clothing.

**Footwear**

Shoes must be neat, clean, and in good condition. Casual slip-on or tie shoes, dress sandals, and clean athletic shoes are allowed. Flip-flops, bedroom slippers, and construction or hunting boots are not acceptable. Rain or snow boots are allowable when weather conditions necessitate wear.

Employees with job responsibilities that require a significant amount of walking and/or standing are encouraged to wear athletic shoes or other supportive shoes.

CFHC, Inc. expects employees to use good judgement when choosing footwear. Shoes with extremely high and/or narrow heels and shoes with no heel support present a potential safety risk and are not recommended. Open-toe shoes are not recommended in direct patient care areas due to possible health risks. However, open-toe shoes are not unallowable in these areas based on the standards within this policy. CFHC, Inc. will not readily accept risk liability for injury due to the wearing of the types of footwear that are clearly discouraged.

**Dress Down Day**

The last business day of each work week is designated as “Dress Down Day” where employees are allowed to dress in casual attire. Casual attire includes denim pants, skirts, dresses, and jeans, as well as t-shirts, provided the attire adheres to the above guidelines. Employees are allowed casual attire while on CFHC, Inc. premises, unless there is a scheduled meeting with non-employees on this day. When representing the company off-site, business casual or clinical attire is required.

CFHC, Inc. promotes workplace culture through holding spirit weeks and recognition of days for healthcare related causes. During these events, attire that supports the cause is permitted as long as it adheres to the standards above. Employees may wear Dress Down Day attire only if they are participating in the activities of spirit week or recognition day; otherwise, they must adhere to business casual attire.

**Exceptions**

Employees assigned to outreach activities off-site (including migrant/seasonal farmworker outreach) may wear jeans on those assigned days only.

Employees assigned to facilities or housekeeping may wear jeans or medical/dental uniforms as standard work attire. Construction or steel-toe boots are acceptable for these employees, when needed, based on job responsibilities.

Information Technology (IT) staff may wear jeans, with permission, as necessary to complete projects requiring physical labor.

A Chief of Staff or the Director of Human Resources has the authority to make an exception to allow employees to wear jeans for a defined project for a defined time period. This exception must be documented in writing.

### **III. ATTACHMENTS**

- *Business Casual Attire Examples*
- *Casual Attire (“Dress Down Day”) Examples*