

ETHICAL CONDUCT, UNIFORM ATTIRE AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE POLICY FOR NURSES AND MIDWIVES



Ethical Conduct, Uniform Attire and Personal Appearance Policy for Nurses and Midwives.

Title	Ethical Conduct, Uniform Attire and Personal Appearance Policy for Nurses and Midwives.
Summary	This document provides instruction as well as guidance about the standards of proper dress code and personal appearance required for all the Nursing and Midwifery staff working in all the different entities within the Public Health Sector.
Responsible Director	Director Nursing Services
Issue Date	April 2018
Review Date	April 2020
Reviewed and agreed upon by	The Nursing Services Directorate in collaboration with the Nursing and Midwifery Management, Practice Nurses Infection Control and the MUMN.

Related Policies and Guidelines:	<p>SOP : ICU 003 Standard Operating Procedure for proper Dress code and Traffic within Operating Theatres</p> <p>No Smoking Policy Hra02POL2007v02.6</p> <p>Policy No: ICU _ 05 POL2011v01- Bare Below the Elbows Policy</p> <p>Hand Hygiene Policy. ICU_02 POL2009 v01.0</p> <p>Public Service Commission (Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations, 1999.</p> <p>OPM No 21/2015. Policy on the use of Social Media in the Public Service.</p> <p>Nurses and Midwives guide to Social Media. Nursing Services Directorate 2016.</p>
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1. Policy Summary

The personal appearance and attire of the Nursing and Midwifery professionals can impact on the safety provided to clients as well as the public perception of the quality of services provided and professionalism at large. Therefore all nursing and midwifery personnel working with patients/clients and/or patients'/clients' families or/and in public areas are expected to dress in a professional manner.

This policy provides direction as well as guidance about the standards of dress code required for nursing and Midwifery personnel working within the National Health Sector.

It is primarily the responsibility of all nursing and midwifery personnel to comply with this policy and procedure and the responsibility of line managers to enforce adherence to this policy.

Failure to follow the requirements set out in this policy and procedure may lead to investigation and may result in disciplinary action.

2. The Objectives

2.1 Client and Staff Safety: To ensure that nurses' and midwives' uniforms and work attire facilitate good practice and minimise any risk to clients and staff. Nothing should be worn that could impede effective hand hygiene or /and compromise clients or staff safety.

2.2 Professional Image and Public Confidence: To ensure a professional image which projects competency, inspires confidence and communicates respect to patients/clients, co-workers and the public.

2.3 Identification: To provide "security through an employee identification system and/or a cue for recognition of staff members' name and designation".

2.4 Staff Comfort: To ensure nursing and midwifery personnel comfort and safety at place of work.

2.5 Equality and Diversity: To ensure that each and every nursing and midwifery personnel is treated equally and that religious and cultural practices are respected as long as the safety of patients/clients, staff and general public are not compromised.

2.6 Uniformity Across all Entities: To put forward a standardised policy that is agreed upon and followed across all entities within the Public Health Sector.

3. Definitions

Clinical environment – any area in which care is delivered to a patient/client. This includes areas such as wards, operating theatres, critical care units, Delivery Suite, outpatients, ambulatory clinics, community, home based setting etc.

Professional Image – The set of qualities and characteristics that represent perception of nurses' / midwives' competence and character as judged by others.

4. Personal Hygiene and Professional Appearance

4.1 All nursing and midwifery personnel should reflect a high standard of cleanliness and hygiene at all times.

4.2 The uniform should be neatly pressed.

4.3 If a nursing or midwifery personnel accidentally damages or permanently stains any item of uniform during their course of work, they must inform their managers so that arrangements can be made for a replacement.

4.4 Chewing gum is not permitted while on duty.

4.5 Language used during the course of work should be polite and professional in nature. No profanity or vulgar slang is permitted.

4.6 Nursing and Midwifery personnel should appear the same within their uniform group and therefore uniforms should not be personalised.

4.7 Nursing and Midwifery personnel should not socialise outside the workplace or undertake social activities such as shopping, personal festivities or errands unrelated to work while wearing the uniform.

5. Infection Control and Patient Safety

5.1 Infection prevention and control as well as safety should be of highest priority guiding all the care, procedures and decisions taken during the course of work.

5.1.1 Bare below the elbow: This policy aims to ensure that all nursing and midwifery personnel have their hands and arms up to the elbow / mid forearm exposed and free from clothing / jewellery so as to facilitate hand hygiene regularly and thoroughly to limit spread of infection.

5.1.2 Approved cardigans may be worn, but must be removed when attending to a patient.

5.1.3 Clothes that become contaminated with body fluids must be changed at the first opportunity and must not pose a risk for spread of infection.

5.2 Personal Protective Equipment

5.2.1 Disposable plastic aprons must be worn when assisting patients with bathing, toileting or any other activity or procedure where contamination with body fluids is possible both inside the hospital premises as well as in the community.

5.2.2 The use of other protective clothing such as aprons, goggles, visors etc should be worn following an assessment of the risk of transmission of microorganisms to the patients and/ or health care professionals and in accordance with infection control and Health and Safety policies.

5.2.3 Personal protective equipment should be discarded appropriately and hands immediately washed thoroughly using soap and water or decontaminated using alcohol gel.

5.3 Operating Theatres

5.3.1 Nursing and midwifery personnel working in operating theatres should abide with this policy and are responsible to strictly follow the **Standard Operating Procedure for proper Dress code and Traffic within Operating Theatres.**

5.3.2 Surgical attire and shoes used in theatres are to be solely used for this purpose within the theatre suite.

6. Shoes:

6.1 The shoes provided by the Ministry for Health which conform to Health and Safety Standards must be worn at all times and kept clean.

6.2 Theatre footwear must be regularly decontaminated in line with theatre guidelines.

7. Socks

7.1 White or black socks are to be worn with the uniforms.

8. Hair

8.1 Hair must be clean and neat in appearance and worn in a professional manner to respect infection control and safe work practices.

8.2 Nursing and midwifery personnel with direct patient/client contact must secure their hair off the shoulder and away from the face so it does not contact the client and interfere with client care.

8.3 With the exception of theatre staff, headwear should not be worn unless it forms part of religious attire.

8.4 Facial hair such as beards and sideburns must be neat, clean and well trimmed and must not present a bushy or uncombed appearance.

9. Nails

9.1 Fingernails should be clean and in length that does not interfere with work (not protruding beyond fingertip) and in line with infection control and safe work practices.

9.2 Nail polish, artificial/ gellish nails are not acceptable in the clinical area as they harbour bacteria, especially if they contain artificial materials.

10. Cosmetics and Perfume/Cologne

10.1 All nursing and midwifery personnel may use moderate make-up, perfume, colognes and/or shaving lotions.

11. Jewellery

11.1 In the clinical setting only a plain ring is allowed on the hands. Wrist watches or any other jewellery should not be worn as they increase bacterial contamination which can be transferred to hands.

11.2 Earrings should be small and studs. Only one pair of earrings is permitted.

11.3 Body piercing jewellery is not appropriate to the work setting; hence it should not be visible.

12. Body Art

12.1 Nursing and midwifery personnel should take into consideration the public's expectations and aesthetic impact with

regards to professional image in the workplace when considering getting a tattoo.

13. Use of Mobile/ Smart Phones

13.1 Personal phones should be kept on silent at all times in the clinical area.

13.2 Frequency and duration of personal calls should be kept to the minimum at the workplace. During patient care, calls should not be undertaken except in specific emergencies.

13.3 Hands must be decontaminated before and after phone use and the phone should be decontaminated on a frequent basis using the appropriate disinfection wipe as per manufacturer instructions.

13.4 The personal phone should never be used to take photos in the workplace except in special circumstances (ex wound care) and following acquisition of consent and permission.

13.5 Social networking/media such as but not limited to Facetime, Facebook and Twitter should not be accessed for personal purposes during the working hours.

14. Accessories

14.1 Any pens, scissors, torches should not be carried out in outside breast pockets. They may cause injury and discomfort to patients during care activity; therefore they should be carried inside clothing, in hip pockets or pencil cases.

15. Identification Badges

15.1 Every employee is issued with a personal identification card. This card is to be worn at all times whilst on duty or when representing the hospital/ department and must be displayed on the front portion of the outer garment, clearly visible and not obscured in any way.

15.2 Retractable badge holders are recommended.

15.3 In specific cases when working with high risks groups, identification badges are to removed during patient contact so as to prevent any injury to the patient or/and staff.

16. Students

16.1 Students during their training placements are expected to wear the uniform approved by the Faculty of Health Sciences and or other approved educational entities and to follow relevant provisions of this policy.

17 Equality

17.1 The Ministry for Health together with the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity embrace the values of equality and diversity.

17.2 This policy also aims to adhere to these principles and to meet requirements of cultural and religious wear as long as these conform to the health, safety, security regulations and infection control principles.

17.3 The wearing of turbans, hijabs, kipphas and clerical collars arising from particular religious or/and cultural norms are seen as part of welcoming diversity, however it should respect the uniform colour scheme.

18 Non Uniformed Staff

18.1 There are certain areas where nursing and midwifery staff is not required to wear a uniform (Appendix 1) for a myriad of reasons. However they still have the responsibility to dress in a manner which is presentable and smart in appearance to inspire public confidence as well as in adherence to infection control and health and safety principles and policies.

18.2 Dress should enhance the dignity of the wearer and respect those that come in contact with, therefore the following attire is not permitted,

- Halter or low-cut tops and dresses
- Tops and dresses with straps for female staff
- Sleeveless tops, singlet or tank tops should not be worn for male staff
- Torn and/or low hipster jeans
- Short shorts
- Mini skirts
- Faded, bleached, torn or patched clothing
- Clothing with adverts, logos, images and/or written statements
- No revealing clothing may be worn

19. Attire when attending activities on behalf of the service

19.1 When attending training courses, seminars, etc under the auspices of the Hospital/ department or when representing the Hospital/ department at meetings, it is expected that all staff will dress appropriately in order to project a professional image for oneself and for the Health Care Sector.

20. Responsibility

20.1 All staff is encouraged to draw the attention of whoever does not adhere to this policy.

20.2 All line managers who observe breaches of Uniform and Dress code policy are expected to address this with the individual concerned.

20.3 The Hospital / Entity Management shall be responsible for ensuring the provision and coordination of sufficient uniform supplies.

The Chief Nursing/Midwifery Managers and/or Senior Nurse/Midwifery Managers and/or Administrators shall ensure compliance with this policy, undertake regular monitoring via spot checks and/or audit activities and take appropriate and reasonable actions in cases where the policy is breached.

21. Adherence to Policy

21.1 The need for any variation should be discussed with the Chief Nursing/Midwifery Managers and/or Senior Nurse/Midwifery Managers for further discussions and approval.

21.2 The special needs of pregnant staff or people with disabilities should be assessed and advice obtained from the Occupational Health Service/ Nurse.

21.3 Failure of any nursing and midwifery personnel to adhere to the regulations without any valid reason as outlined herein may lead to disciplinary action.

22. Distribution

This policy shall be disseminated to all nursing and midwifery personnel and subsequently with the distribution of the new uniforms and/or to all recruits.

23. Revision

It is the responsibility of the Nursing Services Directorate to initiate any revisions to this policy every 2 years.

Appendix 1:

Clothing:

The official colour of uniforms for nurses and midwives working in government hospitals and homes for the elderly are as follows:

Profession	Uniform colour
Enrolled Nurses	Light green tunic and white trousers
Senior staff nurses / Staff Nurses	Light blue tunic and white trousers
Deputy Charge Nurses	Blue tunic and white trousers
Charge Nurses	Royal Blue tunic and white trousers
Senior staff midwives / Midwives	Turquoise tunic and trousers
Deputy charge Midwives	Turquoise tunic with yellow piping and turquoise trousers
Charge Midwives	Turquoise tunic with white piping and turquoise trousers
Practice Nurses / Midwives	Purple (Females)/ Blue (Males) tunic and blue trousers

The official uniform for nurses and midwives working in Health Centres and ambulatory care settings:

Profession	Uniform colour
Enrolled Nurses	Green very small check with darker horizontal lines shirt/ tunic and bottle green trousers/ skirt. (White polo shirt in summer)
Senior staff nurses / Staff Nurses	Blue very small check with darker horizontal lines shirt/ tunic and navy blue trousers/ skirt (White polo shirt in summer)
Deputy Charge Nurses	Sky Blue with white pin stripes shirt/ tunic and navy blue trousers/skirt (White polo shirt in summer)
Charge Nurses	Navy Blue with white pin stripes shirts/ tunics and navy blue trousers/skirt (White polo shirt in summer)
Practice Nurses	Dark Lilac very small check with darker horizontal lines shirt /tunic and navy blue trousers /skirt (White polo shirt in summer)
Charge Midwives	Light Pink with grey pin stripes shirt /tunic and navy blue trousers/ skirt (White polo shirt in summer)

Units with Uniforms (Scrubs) making use of Hospital Laundry include:

Operating Theatres	Green Scrubs
Intensive Therapy Unit	Blue Scrubs
CICU	Light Blue Scrubs
Cath Lab	Dark Blue Scrubs

Units where uniform is not worn include:

Parent Craft	Mater Dei Hospital
Hostel, Half Way House Rehabilitation Unit, community mental health outreach and YPU	Mount Carmel Hospital.
Psychiatric outpatients	Mater Dei Hospital

Appendix 2:

1 General Guidelines:

1.1 Clothing worn at work which is not part of the uniform and is bought on one's own initiative, e.g., over-jackets etc should follow a similar colour scheme as that of uniform. These should be removed when attending to a patient/client .

1.2 Undergarments worn under the uniform for modesty or warmth must be plain, short sleeved and neutral in colour and shall not be visible under the uniform.

1.3 Nursing and midwifery personnel should take into account the public's expectations with regards to professional image in the workplace when choosing hair colorants and haircut styles.

2 Laundering of Uniforms

A clean uniform must be worn every shift/ working day.

Hand washing uniforms is ineffective and therefore not acceptable.

General guidelines recommend that the uniform is washed separately from general household items in a washing machine at 60 °C, dried and ironed as this removes most of the microorganisms.

The clean uniform must be stored in a plastic bag, to prevent contamination from dust or other pollutants.

Index:

A

- Accessories 8
- Attire when attending activities on behalf of the service 10
- Adherence to Policy 11
- Appendix 1 12, 13, 14
- Appendix 2 15

B

- Body Art 7

C

- Cosmetics and Perfume/Cologne 7
- Clothing 12, 13, 14

D

- Definitions 4
- Distribution 11

E

- Equality 9

G

- General Guidelines 15

H

- Hair 6

I

- Infection Control & Patient Safety 5
- Identification Badges 8

J

- Jewellery 7

L

- Laundering of Uniforms 15

N

- Nails 7
- Non Uniformed Staff 9

P

- Policy Summary 3
- Personal Hygiene and Professional Appearance 4

R

- Responsibility 10
- Revision 11

S

- Shoes 6
- Socks 6
- Students 9

T

- The Objectives 3

U

- Use of Mobile/Smart Phones 8



Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Ministry for Health