**Student dress code**

**Why do we have a dress code?**

The BSMS dress code has been designed to:

* reduce risk of cross-infection (e.g. improved hand hygiene);
* to avoid an unintentional injury to patients (e.g. from wristwatches or jewellery);
* to reduce likelihood of injury to students (e.g. assault – neck chains);
* to respect the cultural values or beliefs of patients, visitors and staff and avoid unnecessary offence or distress.

All students should consider the patient group they work with, and dress with a view to ensuring that their appearance will not be distracting or distressing, and will inspire confidence with regard to safety and infection control. BSMS respects the right for students to adhere to religious and cultural observances or adaptations necessary due to disability. However, for clinical students, consideration should be given to infection control, safety, the operation of machinery, and clear identification and communication.

**The BSMS dress code**

You should follow this code when in a clinical environment and when meeting patients. Please note that this includes examinations which occur in, or simulate, the clinical environment, such as the OCSEs.

* A visible photo identity **badge** should be worn and clearly displayed at all times. For students in direct patient contact only the clip-on style should be worn to reduce contamination. It is good infection control practice to clean ID badges daily to remove contaminants (as with phones and pens). Stethoscopes (both bell and earpieces) should also be cleaned after every patient encounter.
* Your **clothes** should be clean, tidy and free from obvious dirt and stains, and you should maintain have a good standard of personal hygiene.
* For students working in clinical areas, shirts must be **short-sleeved** or worn with the sleeves rolled up, to facilitate effective hand decontamination. Shirts should be worn tucked in.
* **Jackets** and other outerwear should be removed when performing clinic, ward or theatre work to ensure effective hand decontamination.
* **Jewellery** should be kept to a minimum for infection and safety reasons. You may be required to cover or remove jewellery if it poses any risk. When in direct contact with patients, facial piercings should be removed or limited to small studs, and rings should be minimised and should be plain bands only. Wrist watches and bracelets should not be worn when in direct physical contact with patients. A kara may be worn, but should be pushed as high up the arm as is comfortable, and secured in place to enable effective hand and wrist hygiene.
* **Hair** should be clean and tidy. Hair that falls below the collar should be secured away from the face in a way that does not need constant readjusting. Facial hair must be kept short, neatly trimmed or tidily secured. The presence of a beard can prevent the passing of fit tests for level 3 PPE, which may cause issues for some students on religious grounds; in which case a respirator hood should be available.
* **Headwear,** for example, turbans and kippot, and headscarves are permitted on religious grounds, provided that patient care, health and safety, infection control and security and safety of patients or staff is not compromised. Headscarves must be worn unadorned and secured neatly.

In surgical theatres normal cloth headscarves may be worn for each theatre attendance and subsequently washed at 60C with or without an additional theatre cap; alternatively single use theatre disposable headscarves approved by infection control may be worn.

* **Ties** and other superfluous clothing (e.g. scarves, wraps etc.) should not be worn when involved in patient care as they are infrequently laundered and are often handled by the wearer unconsciously without washing their hands.
* **White coats** should not be worn unless they are part of uniform, lab wear or part of personal protective equipment, as they do not provide adequate protection from contaminants and do not facilitate effective hand decontamination.
* **Trousers** should not pose a hazard to yourself or others or be a hindrance to your work (e.g. no very long or overly flared trousers, or trousers which need to be continually hitched up).
* **Scrubs** may only be worn by authorised student groups and not outside the clinical area. They must not be worn outside the hospital premises, to prevent cross-contamination, maintain public confidence and personal safety.
* **Personal protective clothing** should be worn as provided, to ensure compliance with Health and Safety Regulations and infection control policies. This includes all staff adopting Universal Precautions and the single use of gloves and plastic aprons, where indicated for use. If adherence to ‘bare below the elbow’ rules is required, disposable oversleeves will be offered to ensure that students can remain covered while adhering to safety guidelines.
* **Shoes** should be neat and clean with a closed toe, and should be in good repair. Comfortable footwear is important, but please ensure that trainers and other sports shoes are clean and wipeable. Shoes must enclose the whole foot and be plain to facilitate cleaning. Open-toe shoes or sandals are not permitted as they provide no protection from injury. Theatre-style clogs must not be worn outside of the critical care setting e.g. endoscopy or theatres.
* Your **face** must be fully visible for the purposes of recognition and communication with patients and staff. Head dresses worn as part of religious observance must not cover the face.
* **Nails** should be kept clean and short. Nail varnish and false nails should not be worn, in order to minimise the risk of infection.

Local NHS settings have their own dress codes and guidelines, which may differ slightly from this dress code. Where there is a discrepancy, students should adhere to local NHS guidelines. If students feel they are being challenged about what they wear in a discriminatory way, or not in line with local dress code policies they should contact the module lead or a member of the phase team at BSMS.

The clinician you are working with is within their rights to ask you to leave if they do not consider your appearance to adhere to these guidelines, and this will be recorded as an absence. If you are in any doubt as to what you should wear in a clinical setting, it is best to ask the doctor in charge for advice.

The School expects students to follow this code for Case-Based Discussions, OSCEs and Finals

Exams, where you will be assessed by both internal and external examiners and may be observed by the GMC.

If your dress does not match this code, you may be asked to leave the exam to change into more suitable clothing.

Even outside of clinical settings, it is good practice to bear in mind this clinical code in other study spaces at BSMS, in order to form good habits that will instil confidence in professional settings.

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