

Frequently asked question on dress and faith

My organisation has rules on personal appearance and dress. Are we in breach of the legislation?

If your company rules are in place for health and safety reasons or to protect your image with customers they may be lawful. It is important to explain the company's policy on dress and appearance, but organisations should try to be flexible where they can to enable staff to dress in accordance with their beliefs but still meet the organisation's requirements.

After the French ban on wearing religious dress in schools and recent legal rulings about Muslim dress, should students be allowed to wear overt religious symbols in school or be forced to wear standard uniform?

The governing body of each school decides on the uniform policy or dress code, and it is the head teacher's responsibility to make sure pupils keep to the rules. While students must stick to the school's uniform policy, schools must be considerate to the needs of different cultures, races and religions. For example, Muslim girls should be allowed to wear appropriate dress that respects their desire for modesty and Sikh boys allowed to grow their hair and cover with traditional head covering. It is inappropriate for a student to be punished for breaking uniform rules that make him or her adopt a different cultural, racial or religious dress code.