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1 Policy & Guide Statement

The SVR considers the wearing of correct uniform to be of significant benefit in providing a historically accurate, informative and educational experience to all our passengers.

This document is split into two simple parts: a formal policy that sets out the basic expectations of the Severn Valley Railway in relation to staff behaviour, uniform and presentation, and a guide providing further information on presentation, for those interested in going further to help our visitors step back in time.

The presentation policy applies to all members of operational railway staff, whether acting in a voluntary or paid capacity, whilst working on the SVR in the view of paying passengers. Such roles include, but are not limited to, Drivers, Firemen / Second-men, Signalmen, Guards, Travelling Ticket Inspectors, Porters, On-train Buffet and Booking Office staff. It is important that our personal appearance and behaviours reflect our company values and present a smart and consistent image to our passengers.

As with all published policies and instructions, the SVR expects all staff to adhere to the policy when on duty.



2 Key Principles: Behaviour & Heritage

The nature of our business is such that our reputation is determined by the quality of our service and the impression we create with both our current and potential customers. It is imperative that your personal appearance, hygiene and attitude is of the highest standard, thus enhancing our commitment to the achievement of continual excellence.

Wherever you work, it must be remembered that the customer is paying for and has the right to expect the best possible service and to identify railway staff easily. Whilst at work and whilst travelling on the railway or using its facilities your behaviour should reflect the highest standards. Reports of inappropriate behaviour of staff members whether on or off duty will be investigated and could lead to formal disciplinary action.

Visitors to the Severn Valley Railway are taking a trip back in time. They are walking into an immersive experience, onto a stage for the main characters – our locomotives and rolling stock! The SVR is not just a railway, but a fantastic living museum of yesteryear's rail travel, with lovingly restored stations, signal boxes and rolling stock. Passenger facing staff are no less a part of the overall scene, and we must work hard to maintain the time-travelling illusion when visitors come into contact with members of staff. Our behaviour and our uniforms should reflect the best traditions of the steam-age railway.

The railway is set to the approximate time period of 1930 – 1965, covering the Great Western and British Railways (Western Region) eras, and as such all of our stations and the vast majority of our rolling stock collections represent this period; staff are encouraged therefore to present themselves appropriately to match this. The minimum requirements outlined in this policy will ensure a uniform and period appearance. But you are very welcome to go further, to accurately represent staff from the GWR or BR(W). Representing the SVR brand in initial badges and roundel patches on a period-style uniform is also welcome. We do not think twice about going to great lengths to ensure that every station, carriage and locomotive are turned out in a period appropriate way. Wouldn't the railway look fantastic if we applied the same standards to our own turnout?

Further information on achieving an authentic look can be found in the guidance section at the end of this document and the full Presentation Committee Uniform Guide or on SVRLive.

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3 Staff Presentation Policy

The following sections outline the policy on staff presentation which applies to all members of operational railway staff, whether acting in a voluntary or employed capacity, whilst working on the SVR in the view of paying passengers. Flagrant or repeated breaches of this policy without good reason (such as last-minute cover or an emergency) may, as a last resort, cause disciplinary action to be considered.

The SVR recognises and values the diversity of cultures, religions and disabilities of its staff and will take an open approach to dress or uniform requirements in order to accommodate individuals' needs. If you have any concerns or require specific guidance with regards the SVR Staff Presentation Policy then please discuss this with your direct Line Manager or Head of Department.

4 Minimum Uniform Requirements

Uniformed Grades	Footplate Crew
White Shirt / Blouse	Smart shirt, plain or muted pattern (plain polo or T-shirt acceptable for BR end-of-steam era, however a shirt is preferred)
Black / Dark Blue trousers (not cargo trousers)/ skirt	Bib & Brace or Footplate Trousers
Black / Dark Blue Waistcoat / Pullover or Jumper (ideally V-necked)	Overalls for prep & disposal – not to be worn during ordinary running duties
Smart black shoes / Black work boots	Black safety footwear
Tie – SVR, period pattern or muted single colour	Tie or neckerchief recommended

Notes:

- Modern styles of clothing, such as baseball caps, fleeces (sleeved or unsleeved), modern style jackets, or cargo trousers whether SVR branded or not are **not** appropriate wear as they instantly represent a modern image, rather than that of a period style.
- Some internal departmental or local procedures may stipulate more than these railway-wide minimum requirements.
- Diesel Crew may adhere to either of the above standards, or pursue an authentic *period* diesel driver appearance (see the Presentation Committee's Uniform Guide for further information).

5 PPE & Safety

High visibility clothing is not period appropriate, and it is recommended that the wearing of such items is kept to a minimum where possible, and not at all where it is unnecessary such as on-board trains and on station platforms.

Modern day legislation requires the wearing of such modern safety clothing, and it is quite reasonable to expect the heritage atmosphere of our stations dampened by their introduction, however, this should not permit the unnecessary wearing of such clothing and we ask that everybody be mindful of this when working on and around the railway.

In exceptional circumstances, such as adverse weather, it is quite reasonable for elements of this policy to be relaxed. During heatwaves, for example, just a shirt and open collar would be acceptable, provided you remain smart throughout. For any advice on this, please discuss with your head of department.

HERITAGE CONCERNS DO NOT OUTWEIGH SAFETY CONCERNS AND APPROPRIATE PPE MUST ALWAYS BE WORN AS STIPULATED BY SVR POLICY.

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6 Behaviour

As well as representing the railway as a physical living museum, it is important to remember that we are also recreating an important part of social history, and so there are aspects of our behaviour whilst interacting with our passengers that are worthy of consideration.

It is unlikely, for example, that a member of staff of the Great Western Railway would refer to passengers as “mate” or “guys”, and so period-appropriate terms such as “ladies and gentlemen”, “sir” and “madam” should be used where possible; although consideration must be given to be inclusive of all people. It is important that you remain polite and calm whilst on duty; bad language will not be tolerated.

Furthermore, as a railway representative of the 1930s to 1960s, we carry “passengers”, and not customers. Tannoy announcements can make a huge impression on our visitors’ experience; important information does need to be imparted to them, but they need to be transformed into the past, and not to a theme park. Excessive tannoy announcements are irritating, distracting and can result in important information being missed.

Similarly, many of us are used to carrying mobile phones, radios and cameras around with us whilst we undertake our duties. It is recommended that whilst these can sometimes be essential to our safety critical duties, their exposure in front of passengers and use thereof is kept to a minimum where possible.

7 Hats and Caps

When working on the railway, most staff should aim to wear caps or hats appropriate to their grade. These can be in the form of bowler or trilby hats for senior railway employees (Inspectors etc.), issued railway uniform caps for uniformed roles and flat caps for non-uniformed staff. **This is especially important for traincrew and platform staff, as it helps to explicitly identify your status to visitors as a member of staff they can approach for help or guidance.**

Headscarves worn for religious or cultural reasons should match the individual’s uniform where possible.

8 Personal Appearance and Accessories

Hair and facial hair should be neat, clean and tidy at all times.

Those with long hair must give consideration to the nature of operational railway duties and take appropriate measures to ensure personal safety.

Make up should be kept natural, discreet and appropriate.

Tattoos that could be considered offensive must be covered.

Jewellery (including watches) and wristbands, with the exception of those for medical identification, should be discreet, appropriate and not cause offence (note: any religious symbols are **not** considered offensive). Jewellery that could constitute a safety risk in the staff member’s role must not be worn.

Sunglasses should only be worn if it is absolutely necessary for you to carry out your duties (such as photo-reactive prescription glasses or similar).

Lanyards are not period appropriate and instantly break the illusion of a heritage atmosphere, a whistle chain is a preferred alternative.

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9 Staff Presentation Guidance

The following information does not constitute formal policy but is for anyone who wishes to take their authentic appearance further.

The SVR appreciates that uniform can come at a significant cost, and most volunteers build up an outfit over a period of time rather than all in one go. It can be very satisfying to pursue an authentic look and really put yourself in the shoes of our forebears, and it really helps to tie the look of the whole railway together, especially during special events such as galas and 1940s weekends. We cannot always pair the right loco with the right stock – your GWR or BR uniform may not perfectly match the stock in front of you – but as long as we do our utmost to ensure the authenticity of each single piece of the jigsaw, we’ll be doing the very best we can! Similarly, anyone wishing to accurately represent staff of the other ‘big four’ (SR / LMS / LNER) or BR regions will be welcomed. Impressions of earlier eras such as 1900-30 are also appropriate, whilst later era impressions are appropriate in the correct context, such as diesel footplate crew or more widely during a diesel event.



10 Uniformed Grades

This section will give a basic explanation of what staff wore during the era which the SVR endeavours to represent.

The aim of wearing a uniform is to give a good impression to our passengers and state your position of authority. It is for these reasons that early railway uniforms were loosely based on that of the military. By wearing a smart uniform and cap, you present yourself as a professional and authoritative servant of the company, something which passengers look for and expect from us.

BR and GWR Standard issue uniforms were either black or a very dark shade of blue, and so either colour is appropriate for the SVR. The standard issue of uniforms for staff were as follows;

- High Waist Trousers, or traditional below-knee length woollen skirt for women.
- Waistcoat:
 - Sleeved (generally worn by signalmen, shunters, porters and goods guards)
 - Sleeveless (generally worn by passenger guards, TTIs and senior station staff)
 - Women were generally not issued with waistcoats
- Jacket:
 - Single breasted (generally worn by signalmen, porters, some shunters and some TTIs)
 - Double breasted (generally worn by guards, some shunters and some TTIs)
 - Evidence suggests women generally wore a similar style of single breasted jacket as issued to men.
- Cap:
 - Soft crown (generally worn by signalmen, porters, shunters and goods guards)
 - Wired crown (generally worn by passenger guards, TTIs and senior station staff)
 - Evidence suggests women were issued soft crowned caps sometimes with fabric-covered peaks.

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- Overcoats:
 Double Breasted greatcoat in heavy wool
 Black waterproof mackintosh

11 Patches, Badges and Buttons

Cloth patches were worn on the lapels and caps of many GWR Uniformed Grades, and SVR versions are also appropriate. Historically, red was worn by grades such as loco crew, shunters, porters and signalmen, whilst yellow was worn by grades such as passenger guards, TTIs and senior station staff.



British Railways issued 'Cycling Lion', 'Fishtail' and 'Totem' cap badges for servants of the company, stating either a role, or just British Railways if a role-specific badge was not made. These badges were also coloured in enamel to represent the region of British Railways to which they apply, for example, Western Region were brown.



These badges were issued in either gilt or nickel. Gilt was generally issued to more senior roles, such as passenger guards, senior station staff and drivers. When worn with a uniform, the buttons would be in gilt or nickel to match the badge. After c.1956, a 'ferret and dartboard' badge in matching colour was usually worn above totem and fishtail badges.



Many uniformed staff are keen to wear additional pin badges, either historically accurate additions to their uniform, or modern badges to show their years or service, appreciation for a particular locomotive or organisation. This is suitable to a degree, but a significant number of badges looks unprofessional.



Railway issue overcoats, jackets and waistcoats were supplied with metal buttons of varying design from company to company and era. After 1933, the GWR standardised on 'roundel' buttons in brass, which can be polished to a high shine. Senior staff such as Passenger Guards often wore a version where the roundel was surrounded by oak leaves and topped by a crown.

British Railways issued one design of button in two metals, a nickel silver for staff such as shunters, porters and signalmen, and a gilt bronze for staff such as passenger guards, TTIs and senior station staff.

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12 Locomotive Crew Grades

All locomotive crew are required to wear uniform as per their departmental procedures, and safety-wear as stipulated.

BR and GWR footplate clothing was made from a thick cotton weave in blue, both hard-wearing and safe around flammable materials. Additionally, thick serge jackets and mackintosh raincoats were available, although few loco crew would have had a full set.



The basic items were as follows:

- Trousers
 - High Waist Trousers
 - Bib & Brace (Dungarees)
- Jacket
 - Button to neck, stand up military style or lie-down shirt style collar (GWR era)
 - Conventionally lapelled single-breasted three button jacket design (GWR and BR eras)
- Cap

The GWR issued a soft peaked cap in the same cloth as jackets and trousers. Very few survive and no replicas are made. A traditional working man's flat cap is appropriate.

The traditional 'greasetop' loco crew hat did not reach Western areas until BR days.

There is plenty of photographic evidence showing loco crew, especially firemen, wearing handkerchiefs on their heads to absorb sweat. This is perfectly acceptable!

Far more so than with the uniformed grades, issue clothing was often supplemented by personal items such as a flat cap, old civilian jacket, woollen pullover or jumper etc. Working within the need to maintain a smart and professional appearance to our visitors, volunteers are welcome to add these to their uniform.

Note: The above guidance for loco crew is to be considered unisex.

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13 Other Uniformed Departments

Other departments (On-Train Buffet/Dining etc.) have specific speciality uniform and staff in these departments are expected to follow departmental guidance in uniform matters. In the absence of such guidance or uniform, standard uniformed grade minimum requirements apply.

14 A note for non-passenger facing roles

Many working in maintenance and restoration capacities around the railway will be in the sight of passengers and should bear this in mind when undertaking duties, removing high visibility clothing if practicable when not necessary, removing dirty clothing before sitting down in buffets and on trains, and avoiding or hiding t-shirts with potentially offensive messages on them.

However, if you wish to take on the appearance of a steam-age labourer or ganger when you're working, that would be brilliant! An old pair of corduroy trousers, a collarless 'grandad' shirt and an old waistcoat help maintain the time-travel illusion far more effectively than a pair of jeans, a t-shirt and a fleece.

15 Suppliers

The first port of call for all new volunteers should be the Volunteer Liaison Office (VLO) at Bewdley. Large ranges of uniform and PPE are stocked by the Office and available at a discount to working members courtesy of the SVR Company Limited. The VLO also operate a tailored uniform provision where uniform trousers, waistcoats and jackets are available.

Be aware that all of the 'minimum requirements' uniform items can be obtained at very low prices in supermarket clothing sections or in charity shops. A full list of other suppliers can be found in the SVR Uniform Guide.

Photographs: Jamie Green and Jason Houlders

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