



RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

NEU MODEL POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 From time to time, personal relationships may exist or develop between work colleagues. They may arise at any time during an individual's employment, as well as exist prior to the employee joining (insert employer name).
- 1.2 Personal relationships could affect, or be perceived by others to affect, the credibility or objectivity of our operations and we therefore need to have guiding principles in place.
- 1.3 This procedure will apply to all employees. The golden rule is that each of us should ensure that our conduct is not called into question in performing our professional duties.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 It is important that personal relationships at work are managed with care and sensitivity. This policy does not prohibit personal relationships at work. It is intended to provide an outline of the expectations placed on members of staff and their managers so that such situations are dealt with fairly and consistently. It is also intended to protect staff so that they are not open to allegations such as impropriety, bias, abuse of authority, or conflicts of interest.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This procedure applies to all employees of (insert employer name).

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 4.1 The personal relationships at work policy must always be applied fairly and in accordance with employment law and (insert employer name) Equal Opportunities Policy.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The employer is responsible for maintaining fair, consistent and objective procedures for matters relating to personal relationships at work.

- 5.2 The principal/headteacher has overall responsibility for the internal organisation, control and management of the policy in their workplace.
- 5.3 The members of the SLT (senior leadership team) or designated senior manager have responsibility for the internal organisation, control and management of their area of responsibility.

6. DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Personal relationships include spouses, civil partners, family relatives, romantic involvements, close friends, and business and commercial relationships.
- 6.2 Working relationships include colleagues, contractors, agency workers, or any other third party with which (insert employer's name) does business.
- 6.3 If you have any doubts over whether a relationship with an individual falls within the scope of these guiding principles, please consult your line manager or head of department.

7. PRINCIPLES

- 7.1 A personal relationship in itself will not advantage or disadvantage any employee. It is up to each member of staff to decide whether a personal relationship exists and, if so, declare to their line manager or appropriate member of the SLT any personal relationships which may give rise to a conflict of interest or any work place advantage, perceived or otherwise. Where this is unclear, staff members are encouraged to discuss this with their line manager in the first instance. A declaration can be made through an email to the line manager but may need to be discussed further depending on the circumstances of the relationship (i.e. professional conflict of interest).
- 7.2 Managers are responsible for dealing with these matters sensitively and effectively. For example, they should discuss matters with the parties concerned before taking any action in line with the policy. Managers should take all reasonable steps to avoid actual and perceived conflicts of interest. Managers are expected to maintain confidentiality, where appropriate, and should not disclose any information about personal relationships without first informing the staff member/s concerned. Advice should be sought from HR where relevant/necessary.
- 7.3 No employee will be unfairly treated or discriminated against on the basis of a personal relationship, perceived or other. Where this is the case, the employee should raise this concern with a senior manager in the first instance or HR.
- 7.4 Staff should always behave in a professional manner. For example, kissing, holding hands, etc. are not appropriate at work or around school premises. Equally, personal conflict should not be brought into the workplace.
- 7.5 It is not generally necessary to declare a personal relationship between two individuals who have little or no professional contact (for example, in unrelated roles or in two separate academies).

- 7.6 Failure to declare a personal relationship that has, or could be reasonably perceived to have given rise to a conflict of interest or any workplace advantage could be considered as a disciplinary matter. Where there has been a declaration of interest, but the employee(s) allow the personal relationship to impact adversely on others in the workplace, could also be considered a disciplinary matter.

8. APPEALS

- 8.1 Employees who wish to appeal against any disciplinary action arising from a breach of this policy should use the disciplinary appeals procedure and they are entitled to a trade union representative.
- 8.2 Where employees consider themselves to have been treated unfairly as a result of their personal relationship with another member of staff, they should initially raise this informally with their manager. If this is not appropriate or does not result in a satisfactory outcome, they should raise it formally by making use of the grievance procedure.
- 8.3 If an employee has a concern about potential conflict of interest arising from personal relationships, they should in the first instance raise this with a senior manager in the academy or with HR.

9. FURTHER GUIDANCE

- 9.1 Further guidance in the application of this policy may be found in appendix 1 or may be sought from a member of the HR team.

10. REVIEW

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years in consultation with the recognised trade unions.

Appendix 1:

1. Recruitment: Employees involved with the recruitment process should declare any personal relationship with any applicant. If such a declaration is made, consideration will be made to whether there is any potential conflict of interest and the employee may /may not remain part of the process.

Successful applicants for employment with (insert employer name) will be asked to declare if they have any family members or close relationships to an existing (insert employer name) employee. This will not impact on the offer of employment, where the applicant is successfully appointed.

2. Existing staff members should declare to their heads of department or line managers any personal relationships that exist or develop with another member of staff or third party where:

- a) Both parties are required to cooperate over work matters where one party is seen or required to make/influence a judgement during the course of their duties which affects the other.
 - b) Where there is a line management relationship between the parties.
 - c) Where a change of role, promotion or transfer means that either of the above will happen.
3. Examples of potential conflicts of interest include (this is not intended to be an exhaustive list) :
- a) The processes of recruitment and promotion;
 - b) Authorisation of expenses, overtime or other financial gains;
 - c) Discipline and Grievance proceedings;
 - d) Line Management;
 - e) Procurement and Contract Management;
 - f) Appraisal and / or assessment;
 - g) Pay recommendations.
4. Disciplinary action may be taken in line with the school's disciplinary policy as a result of the following:
- a) where a personal relationship has not been declared and results in unfair advantage or disadvantage to either party;
 - b) where a staff member abuses their authority or influence to bring benefit or detriment to another individual;
 - c) where a personal relationship has not been declared and brings (insert employer name) into disrepute;
 - d) where there has been a breach in confidentiality;
 - e) where the conduct or behaviour of a staff member (or members) is inappropriate or breaches professional standards;

The above list should not be considered exhaustive and if as a result of an existing or previous personal relationship, an employee's actions are perceived or have been shown to be unacceptable, formal action may be taken.