



RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

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CONTENTS

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | introduction | 3 |
| 2. | Definition of related persons | 3 |
| 3. | Good practice | 4 |
| 4. | Identifying a declaring a personal relationship at work | 4 |
| 5. | Personal relationships at work involving a more senior role | 5 |
| 6. | Personnal relationships at work not involving a more senior role | 5 |
| 7. | Personal relationships at work involving a staff member and a pupil or parent of a pupil..... | 6 |
| 8. | Additional Information | 7 |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance to all Staff at the Island Project (“the School”) regarding personal relationships within work.
- 1.2 The use of the word “School” includes the School site at Diddington Hall and the College site at Birmingham Road.
- 1.3 The School recognises the importance of preserving the integrity of professional relationships between members of Staff. Whilst most social and personal relationships need not present a difficulty and can be entirely beneficial in that they promote good working relationships and trust, it is recognised that there will be particular circumstances where Staff members concerned will need to withdraw from certain situations in order to protect themselves, the School and its pupils from any possible criticism of unfair bias
- 1.4 In particular, it is important recognise that relationships at work can leave Staff vulnerable to allegations of bias or coercion in safeguarding matters. Examples would be situations where it is necessary to use the ‘walk around’ procedure (previously called 2:1) with a child or to go hands on. This Policy is in place to minimise these risks.
- 1.4 The purpose of the policy is therefore to:
 - Protect members of Staff from allegations;
 - Avoid any actual or potential conflicts;
 - Avoid misuse of authority.

2. Definition of related persons

- 2.1 In the context of this policy, a personal relationship is defined as follows:
 - Spouse;
 - Parent or child;
 - Siblings;
 - In-laws;
 - Aunt/uncle;
 - Niece/nephew
 - First cousins;
 - Grandparent/grandchild;
 - Member of same household;
 - Persons in a romantic or sexual relationship;
 - Close personal friendships; and
 - Significant business relationships.
- 2.2 The above definitions are examples of personal relationships which may give rise to conflicts of interests in the workplace. However personal relationships are not

restricted to these examples and anyone who considers that they are in a potential conflict of interests should declare it as outlined in the policy below.

3. Good Practice

- 3.1 Staff should conduct themselves at all times in ways that are consistent with their role and duties and within all School policies (including those relating to equal opportunity, harassment and all codes of conduct). The recruitment, selection, treatment, development and promotion of staff should be based solely on evidence and not be in any way affected by personal relationships at work
- 3.2 Where personal relationships occur between members of staff, it is the responsibility of both individuals to avoid any actual or potential conflicts of interest
- 3.3 Staff who are in a personal relationship must not display intimate behaviour whilst at work and especially in the presence of pupils.
- 3.4 All members of Staff have a responsibility to follow the terms of this policy. In cases where Staff are unsure that the policy is being adhered to or where they believe a breach may have occurred or is likely to occur, the member of Staff should raise the breach or potential breach with the relevant Unit Head, School Manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (“SLT”)
- 3.5 Once the matter has been raised, if it is unavoidable that others be informed and the matter will need to be discussed with the members of Staff involved and also with senior members of Staff. However, any discussions will be undertaken with consideration to the sensitivities of the person reporting the breach and the potential impact on their working relationships
- 3.6 If the member of Staff involved in the actual or potential breach is a Head of Unit or the a member of the SLT, the member of Staff concerned about the breach or potential breach should raise their concerns with another member of the SLT or they may go direct to the Trustees.

4. Identifying and declaring a personal relationship at work

- 4.1 Staff should declare to their Head of Unit, School Manager or member of the SLT any existing or new personal relationship they have with other members of staff or contractors or suppliers which may give rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest, trust or breach of confidentiality.
- 4.2 Head of Unit, School Manager or member of the SLT will treat these matters in confidence and in consultation with the member(s) of staff, find ways in which potential conflicts of interest can be avoided. The SLT will need to be notified of any declaration, but any such declaration will, so far as is practicable, be treated as confidential.
- 4.3 All declarations should be related in confidence, recorded in writing and placed on the employee’s Personnel File located within the School Principal’s Office, Should there be any changes in the future, the member of staff should request that the documents should be removed from the file and destroyed. This can be done by notifying their Unit Head.
- 4.4 Staff who declare a personal relationship at work, should be treated fairly and with due regard to equality of treatment issues.
- 4.5 Staff who are uncertain about whether there is likely to be any risk of a potential conflict of interests emerging from a personal relationship at work, should discuss

the matter with the Head of Unit, School Manager or member of the SLT where the issue may involve their immediate line manager) in the first instance. Staff should approach their line manager in confidence should a relationship develop that may potentially contravene the principles of this policy

- 4.6 Where either a personal relationship as defined above, or a failure to comply with this policy (following investigation) results in an unfair advantage or disadvantage to either of the parties to the relationship the matter will be considered seriously by the School. This includes investigation of the above in accordance with the Disciplinary procedures.

5. Personal relationships at work involving a more senior role

- 5.1 In order to avoid any actual or potential conflict of interests, members of staff who are in a line management or supervisory role, or in a more senior position outside the immediate management structure (eg, within a support service) should not be involved in:
- (a) The activity or performance review, promotion or discipline or any other management activity or process involving a member of staff with whom they have a declared personal relationship
 - (b) The authorisation of any financial payments/decisions relating to financial matters, eg expense claims, salary changes or allocation of personal funding for a member of staff with whom they have a declared personal relationship. However, if the person is the budget holder then they should see the financial transaction but have additional independent authorisation.
- 5.2 Members of Staff, who are in a line management or supervisory role, or in a more senior position outside the immediate management structure should not normally be involved in any way in the recruitment, selection or appointment of any application with whom they have a declared personal relationship and every decision should be justified as fair and equitable without bias or conflict of interest
- 5.3 If a member of Staff believes that they may be personally adversely affected by a misuse of power, authority or conflict of interest relating to a personal relationship at work involving a line manager or supervisor, they should raise this in the first instance with the next higher level of the management structure or directly with a member of the SLT, or they may go direct to the Trustees.
- 5.4 Where there is evidence that a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may result from a personal relationship within a particular organisational structure, the manager to whom the personal relationship has been disclosed should discuss the issue with the Head of Unit, School Manager or member of the SLT may wish to consider an alternative arrangement, eg a change in reporting arrangements, or duties within a team; investigating one party being moved to another area of work or work location, if appropriate in the circumstances. They should consider all such matters in confidence and consult the staff involved and notify the a member of the SLT. In all instances, any changes should, wherever possible, be of equal status.

6. Personal relationships at work not involving a more senior role

- 6.1 Whilst the School is big enough to accommodate partners and family members working within its broad organisational and geographic spread, some regulation is necessary where such Staff are brought into closer contact, eg where they may be

working within the same Unit, or where members of Staff may be required to provide additional 2:1 support.

- 6.2 In establishing whether there is a potential conflict of interest, managers should consider the following:
- (a) Is there any implication in relation to the safeguarding of pupils?
 - (b) Are there any implications in relation to the members of Staff working in the same Units or performing their relevant allocated roles?
 - (c) Are any staff likely to be made uncomfortable in their dealings with either of the two staff members because of the existence of a known personal relationship?
 - (d) Is a personal relationship seen to offer advantage to an employee and disadvantage to another by them feeling excluded from the relationship?
 - (e) Is the relationship potentially interfering with the professional conduct of School business?
 - (f) Is the relationship potentially having a negative effect on the workings of a team?
- 6.3 Where there is evidence that a **potential** safeguarding position exists, or if there is a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may occur as a result of staff with a personal relationship working within the same Unit or in their allocated role, the Unit Head to whom the personal relationship has been disclosed should discuss the issue with a member of the SLT. If the Head of School or Head of Further Education is involved, the Unit Head should discuss with another member of the SLT. The SLT will consider and if necessary put in place alternative arrangements, eg a change in reporting arrangements or duties within the Unit, arranging for one party being moved to another area of work or work location if appropriate in the circumstances. They should consider all such matters. In all instances any changes should be of equal status wherever possible.

7. **Personal relationships at work involving a staff member and a pupil or parent of a pupil**

- 7.1 The School regards it as the unquestionable responsibility of staff to recognise the professional and ethical responsibilities inherent in the staff and pupil relationship, the protection of interests of students, respecting the trust obligation and accepting those constraints and obligations.
- 7.2 It is recognised that members of Staff provide respite care or strike up friendships with parents. If respite care is to be provided:
- (a) the relevant member of Staff is required to sign the Supplementary Work Policy (which can be obtained from the Head of School, Head of Further Education or School Principal):
 - (b) The member of Staff must remember that even though not providing respite care on behalf of the School, they represent the School as their primary employer:
 - (c) Members of Staff must keep the relationship professional;
 - (d) Members of Staff must not discuss School business or other pupils or staff members.

- 7.3 If it is felt that the above guidance is not being followed, the School may rescind its consent to the Secondary Work Policy.
- 7.4 Members of Staff are in a position of trust and **must not** enter into personal relationships with pupils. The school has a legal duty to report any such relationships. Further detailed guidance can be found in the Child Protection Policy and Procedures which **must be adhered to at all times**.
- 7.5 It is recognised that professional relationships between Staff members and pupils may exist. A professional relationship between a member of Staff and a pupil is defined as one where there is an assessing, supervising, tutoring, teaching or pastoral role or a role providing any other support. Any such professional relationship must be notified to the Head of Unit **and** a member of the SLT.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1 Any further information or advice on this process should be obtained from the School Principal in the first instance.

CONFIDENTIAL DECLARATION OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

- This form must be completed, dated and signed by the member of staff who has, or enters into, any personal relationship as defined in the Policy on Personal Relationships at Work (“the Policy”).
- The form must be handed to your Unit Head or a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- The information contained in the form will be used to determine work schedules and positions.
- The form will be held on your personnel file held by the School Principal.
- Should the nature of the declared relationship change at any point, your Unit Head and a member of the Senior Leadership Team should be informed and this form will be removed from your file.
- The information contained in this form will be kept confidential so far as possible and as outlined in the Policy.

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| Staff Name : | |
| Name of person with whom a personal relationship* exists | |
| Nature of relationship: | |
| Name of person with whom a personal relationship* exists | ..... |
| Nature of relationship: | ..... |
| Name of person with whom a personal relationship* exists | ..... |
| Nature of relationship: | ..... |
| Name of person with whom a personal relationship* exists | ..... |
| Nature of relationship: | ..... |
| <p>I understand that this may preclude myself and the other person named in this declaration from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in a 2:1 situation with pupils alone and without interaction with other staff • Working in the same units within School • Providing intimate care together for a pupil • Providing behavioural support together for a pupil <p>I understand that I should conduct myself in a professional manner at all times whilst in work and that failure to do so can result in disciplinary action being taken against me.</p> | |
| Date : | ..... |
| Signed : | ..... |

For Management Use Only

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Notified to : | ..... |
| Signed : | ..... |
| Date : | ..... |