

RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK POLICY

Date of Issue	December 2018
Review Date	December 2022
Ratified by	Finance & Personnel Committee
Date	September 2021
Produced by	HfL
SLT responsible:	Headteacher
Signatures: Chair of Governor Headteacher	



EARNHILL SCHOOL

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1. Objective and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to all school employees including casual workers, agency workers, apprentices, volunteers and Governors regarding personal relationships within the school in order to avoid any actual or potential conflicts of interest or misuse of authority.

2. Definition of Related Persons

In the context of this policy a personal relationship is defined as;

- A family relationship
- A business/commercial/financial relationship
- A romantic/sexual relationship

The above definitions are examples of personal relationships which may give rise to conflicts of interest in the workplace, however personal relationships are not restricted to these examples and anyone who considers that they are in a potential conflict of interest should declare it as outlined in the policy below.

3. Identifying and Declaring a Personal Relationship at Work

Existing or new personal relationships should be declared to the employee's line manager or Headteacher. The line manager or Headteacher will treat these matters in confidence and in consultation with the employees, find ways in which potential conflicts of interest can be avoided. Where personal relationships occur between employees, it is the responsibility of both individuals to avoid any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

All declarations should be treated in confidence, recorded in writing and kept securely. Should there be any changes in the future, the employee should request that the document should be removed from the file and destroyed. Employees who declare a personal relationship at work, should be treated fairly and with due regard to equality of treatment issues.

Employees who are uncertain about whether there is likely to be any risk of a potential conflict of interest emerging from a personal relationship at work, should discuss the matter with their line manager (or Headteacher where the issue may involve the immediate line manager) in the first instance. Employees should approach their line manager in confidence should a relationship develop that may potentially contravene the principles of this policy.

Where either a personal relationship as defined above, or 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 school's Disciplinary procedures.

4. Personal Relationships Involving a More Senior Role

In order to avoid any actual or potential conflict of interest, employees who are in a line management or supervisory role should not be involved in:

- The Appraisal/Performance Review, promotion or discipline or any other management activity or process involving an employee with whom they have a declared personal relationship;
- The authorisation of any financial payments/decisions relating to financial matters e.g. timesheets, fees payments, expense claims, salary changes or allocation of external funding for an employee 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.

Employees who are in a line management or supervisory role, should not normally be involved in any way in the recruitment, selection or appointment of any applicant with whom they have a declared personal relationship. Where it is not practical to remove an employee from the recruitment process, all panel members should be made aware of the personal relationship and every panel decision should be justified as fair and equitable, without bias or conflict of interest.

If an employee believes that they may be personally adversely affected by a misuse of power/authority or conflict of interest, they should raise this with their line manager in the first instance.

Where any employee feels that there is a possible or actual misuse of power/authority or conflict of interest relating to a personal relationship at work involving a line manager, they should raise this in the first instance with the Headteacher.

Where there is evidence that a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may result from a personal relationship, the line manager to whom the personal relationship has been disclosed should discuss the issue with the Headteacher. The Headteacher may wish to consider an alternative arrangement e.g. 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.

5. Personal Relationship at Work Not in a More Senior Role

Whilst the school can accommodate partners and family members working within the organisation some regulation is necessary where such employees are brought into closer contact e.g. within the same Department/Team.

Where there is evidence that a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may occur as a result of employees with a personal relationship working within the same area, the line manager to whom the personal relationship has been disclosed should discuss the issue with the Headteacher. The Headteacher may wish to consider an alternative arrangement, e.g. 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.

6. When a Relationship Breaks Down

There may be occasions when a relationship as defined, breaks down and the individuals concerned remain in the same department/team, with a potential impact on team relationships and service

delivery. If it is envisaged that the breakdown of the relationship is or will cause ongoing workplace issues, these should be addressed sensitively in discussion with the employees with a view to the issues being resolved, where possible.

Appendix 1 – Personal Relationship Disclosure

I have informed my line manager that I have entered into/have an existing personal relationship with another employee of Fearnhill School.

The name of this other employee is:.....
(note that this information can be destroyed upon termination of the personal or employment relationship).

I understand and agree to the following:

- 1) The personal relationship I am in with another employee is welcome and has been entered into with my full and informed consent.
- 2) I am free to terminate this relationship at any time.
- 3) The person I am in a personal relationship with is free to terminate our relationship at any time without experiencing any workplace retaliation from me.
- 4) While in this relationship I will not take a role of direct line management over the other employee with whom I am in a relationship.
- 5) I agree that will not participate in any discussions or decisions related to the terms of the other employee's employment, including those related to appraisal/performance review, promotion, discipline, management activity or process, financial payments or decisions.
- 6) I will not engage in any inappropriate public displays of affection or any inappropriate conduct in the workplace or at work-related functions with the other employee.
- 7) I will not engage in conduct that could reasonably be regarded by other employees as professional favouritism towards the other employee with whom I am in a relationship.
- 8) I agree to behave professionally towards the other employee with whom I am in a relationship at all times while at work or at work related activities, even if the personal relationship ends.
- 9) I will inform the school immediately if the personal relationship ends or if the conduct of the other employee is no longer welcome by me.
- 10) I understand that this information will be kept in confidence and this agreement is not intended to invade my privacy but to affirm that both employees have received and agree to comply with all relevant policy.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....