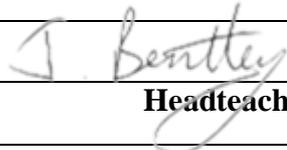


NORTHFIELD SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK POLICY

Date adopted	September 16
Signed by chair of Staffing committee	
Member of staff responsible for monitoring	Headteacher
Review frequency	Biennial

Date	Changes made	Agreed by	Authorised for use by	Date of review

1.0 Introduction

It is not uncommon for people who work for the same School to have a close personal relationship, on either a permanent or short-term basis. While this will not usually raise any issues for the School, there will be certain situations where the School benefits from having a clear policy for avoiding difficulties that may arise from close personal relationships at work.

This policy focuses on close personal relationships between employees. For information regarding close personal relationships between employees and students, please refer to the School's Safeguarding Policy and Safer Working Guidelines.

2.0 Relevant Legislation

Whilst there is no legislation that requires an employee to declare a close personal relationship with another employee, all employees should be aware of legislation that could have an impact on this area.

2.1 Human Rights Act 1998

Employees have the right to respect for private and family life, under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998. This includes a right to be able to form personal relationships. However, the rights under Article 8 may be limited in certain circumstances, such as for the purposes of protecting the rights and freedoms of others, which could include the School and other employees. The School has the right to expect employees to fulfil their duties and to behave in a professional manner at work, and employees have the right to work without being disturbed or distracted by inappropriate behaviour at work.

2.2 Equality Act 2010

The School will not make assumptions on the basis of gender or grade as to who might be the most appropriate employee to redeploy.

The School will not assume that married couples or civil partners will not be able to work together. If any changes are made to an employee's role because they are in a close personal relationship with a colleague, this must be done with clear, objective reasons and not automatically based on their marital or civil partnership status.

The School will ensure that this policy will not have an adverse impact on employees in same-sex relationships.

The School will not make assumptions that an older employee is taking advantage of a younger employee, or vice versa. If the School decides that an employee needs to be redeployed (and if there is a compelling justification for such a move), the selection as to who to move will not be on the grounds of age.

2.3 Implied Contractual Terms

All employees' contracts have an implied "duty of faithful service", which means that they should not act in a way that knowingly damages the School's interests. In this way, they are encouraged to declare potential conflicts of interest, such as certain close personal relationships (such as where there is a line management link, financial or employment links).

3.0 Definitions

Close personal relationships referred to in this policy cover:

- Romantic / sexual relationships
- Family relationships
- Business / financial / commercial relationships

And include:

- Spouse / partner
- Dating couples
- Parents / in-laws / step-parents
- Children / step-children
- Siblings
- Grandparents and grandchildren
- Aunts, uncles and cousins

These lists are not exhaustive and the School encourages employees who are uncertain of what is covered to contact the Head Teacher / Governing Body.

4.0 Aims of the policy

It is important to note that the existence of a close personal relationship between employees would not automatically lead to action being taken, but a possible negative impact on work may require intervention by the School.

The aims of the School are to provide an open and equitable workplace free from bias, where employees can perform their roles without unnecessary distraction from colleagues.

The School will consider the risks that relationships at work could have, where those risks are most likely to occur and the level of impact that they could have. A risk assessment will be created to help the School identify the situations in which it would wish to be informed of a relationship in order to be able to then put in place measures to minimise the potential negative impact.

The School aims to create a culture of openness where employees are willing to disclose their relationship. The School will handle declarations of close personal relationships in a manner that is sensitive and proportionate.

If an employee is in any doubt as to whether their relationship should be disclosed, to seek advice from the Head Teacher / Governing Body.

5.0 Issues that can arise

Line management responsibility includes appraisal and assessment of the employee, as well as decisions in relation to disciplinaries, grievances, allocation of work, the structure of the team and the authorisation of expense claims. A close personal relationship could cause a conflict of interest with those duties and it is likely that other employees would question a manager's decision in relation to a direct report with whom he or she has such a relationship.

A close personal relationship that exists between two colleagues could cause problems for other team members if it interferes with team dynamics or if the two employees bring personal discussions or disagreements to work. There could also be risks of the employees communicating confidential information to each other.

There could be a conflict of interest when an employee is involved in a recruitment or promotion process and they are in a close personal relationship with one of the applicants.

Consideration will be given in a risk assessment process to specific roles where a conflict of interest could occur.

Where there is a close personal relationship of a romantic or sexual nature between employees, there is a risk that public displays of affection at work could cause discomfort for their colleagues. This should be conducted entirely off campus. Intimate contact on work premises could lead to disciplinary action being considered.

Different issues could arise if a relationship breaks up: there is a risk of complaints of unfavourable treatment, reprisals or even harassment. This policy should be read in line with the School's policy on the Prevention of Harassment and Bullying.

Employees are also reminded that the School email system is for business purposes and should not be used to conduct personal relations with colleagues or to send inappropriate material. This policy should also be read in line with the School's policy on the use of email and internet.

6.0 Procedures for dealing with close personal relationships

If one employee from a close personal relationship is in a position of authority over the other, disclosure is expected. The same is expected where there are issues relating to confidentiality, operational issues and financial implications. This is in order that the School can put in place appropriate measures to prevent problems from occurring.

It is the employee's responsibility to inform their line manager or the Head Teacher / Governing Body, in confidence, if they are in a close personal relationship with another employee. If an employee is in any doubt as to whether their relationship should be disclosed, to seek advice from the Head Teacher / Governing Body.

This requirement applies equally to relationships that existed prior to employment and to relationships that develop at the School.

Although the line manager / Head Teacher / Governing Body will treat the disclosure sensitively and in confidence, it is likely that other members of staff will need to be informed. This will be on a strictly need-to-know basis and this will be discussed with the employees first.

The line manager, in consultation with the Head Teacher / Governing Body, will be responsible for making appropriate alternative arrangements in relation to recruitment, selection, appraisal, promotion or other situations or processes where there may be a conflict of interest or where unfair advantage may be gained, or perceived to be gained over other employees. An individual risk assessment will be conducted.

In some cases, it may be necessary to consider moving an employee to another department, or line manager, if the actual or perceived risk of conflict of interest cannot be avoided by other means. This will be discussed with the employees concerned before it is commenced.

Failure to disclose the existence of such a relationship will result in disciplinary action being considered.

Any employee involved in a recruitment and selection process is required to declare a close personal relationship with any of the applicants.

If a close personal relationship ends, the employee should inform their line manager or the Head Teacher / Governing Body. Having this knowledge allows the School to put in place measures to ensure it does not impact on the working environment. Further support will be offered through the School's Employee Assistance Programme.

This policy also applies to casual workers.

7.0 Other relevant policies and procedures:

- Harassment and Bullying
- Email and internet usage
- Disciplinary
- Safeguarding Policy (in terms of relationships with students)
- Safer Working Guidelines