

**Baby Unit for 0 – 2 year old children**

**Day Nursery for 2 – 5 year old children**

**Before and after School Holiday Care for 5 – 16 year old children**

**Primary School Holiday Care for 5 – 16 year old children**

**Relationships at Work Policy**

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance to all staff regarding personal relationships within the work environment.

Twixus 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 may be particular circumstances where staff members concerned will need to withdraw from certain situations in order to protect themselves, the setting and its pupils from any possible criticism of unfair bias.

In particular, it is important to recognise that relationships at work can leave staff vulnerable to allegations of bias or coercion in safeguarding matters.

**The purpose of the policy is therefore to:**

**• Protect members of staff from allegations;**

**• Avoid any actual or potential conflicts;**

**• Avoid misuse of authority.**

This policy covers all employees working at staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

All Senior Leaders have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements.

it.

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.

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.

**Expectations**

Staff should conduct themselves at all times in ways that are consistent with their role and duties and within all other policies

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.

Where personal relationships occur between members of staff, it is the responsibility of both individuals to avoid any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

Staff who are in a personal relationship must not display intimate behaviour e.g. kissing and holding hands, whilst at work and especially in the presence of pupils.

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 principal and safeguarding Lead.

**Actions when a matter is raised**

* Once the matter has been raised, if it is unavoidable that 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.
* Staff should declare any existing or new personal relationships they have with other members of staff, parents of pupils or associates which may give rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest, trust or breach of confidentiality.
* 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 principal and safeguarding lead. instance.
* Staff 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 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 setting. This includes investigation of the above in accordance with the staff contract and Staff conduct policy.

**Personal relationships at work**

In order to accommodate partners and family members working Twixus, some regulation is necessary where such staff are brought into closer contact, e.g. where they may be working within the same class or area.

In establishing whether there is a potential conflict of interest, Senior Leaders should consider the following:

**a) Is there any implication in relation to the safeguarding**

**b) Are there any implications in relation to the members of staff working in the same area 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 setting?**

**f) Is the relationship potentially having a negative effect on the workings of a team?**

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 area, or in their allocated role actions will be taken including -

* alternative arrangements will be put in place, e.g. a change in reporting arrangements or duties or 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.

**Personal relationships at work involving a more senior role**

In order to avoid any actual or potential conflict of interests, members of staff who are in a line management or supervisory role, 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) 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.

C) 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 a member of the principal and Senior Leadership Team.

**When a Relationship Breaks Down**

There may be occasions when a relationship as defined, breaks down which has a potential impact on team relationships and the operation of the setting. 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.

discuss school matters or other pupils or staff members.

**Disciplinary action.**

It is important to be clear that NO disciplinary action will be taken against a member of staff for having a relationship with another member of staff. It is only if the relationship causes a member of staff to act inappropriately that disciplinary action may be appropriate

(examples as below):

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 the school into

disrepute;

d) where there has been a breach in confidentiality;

e) Where a staff member behaves in a way that may cause difficulty or embarrassment

to others, for example, arguing in the workplace or open displays of affection.

f) Where as a result of disagreement or the breakdown of the relationship a staff

member does not communicate with another member of staff or parent

g) Where there is a general adverse impact on team dynamics and reduction in

team morale

h) where the conduct or behaviour of a staff member (or members) is inappropriate or

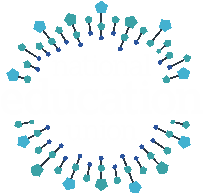
breaches professional standards;

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.

This policy is written with the Guidance of the EYFS and NEU standards (as attached)

# INTRODUCTION



**RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK**

**NEU MODEL POLICY**

* 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).
  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.
  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.

# PURPOSE

* 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.

# SCOPE

* 1. This procedure applies to all employees of (insert employer name).

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

* 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.

# RESPONSIBILITIES

* 1. The employer is responsible for maintaining fair, consistent and objective procedures for matters relating to personal relationships at work.
  2. The principal/headteacher has overall responsibility for the internal organisation, control and management of the policy in their workplace.
  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.

# DEFINITIONS

* 1. Personal relationships include spouses, civil partners, family relatives, romantic involvements, close friends, and business and commercial relationships.
  2. Working relationships include colleagues, contractors, agency workers, or any other third party with which (insert employer’s name) does business.
  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.

# PRINCIPLES

* 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).
  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.
  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.
  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.
  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).
  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.

# APPEALS

* 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.
  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.
  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.

# FURTHER GUIDANCE

* 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.

# REVIEW

* 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.

1. 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:
   1. 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.
   2. Where there is a line management relationship between the parties.
   3. Where a change of role, promotion or transfer means that either of the above will happen.
2. Examples of potential conflicts of interest include (this is not intended to be an exhaustive list) :
   1. The processes of recruitment and promotion;
   2. Authorisation of expenses, overtime or other financial gains;
   3. Discipline and Grievance proceedings;
   4. Line Management;
   5. Procurement and Contract Management;
   6. Appraisal and / or assessment;
   7. Pay recommendations.
3. Disciplinary action may be taken in line with the school’s disciplinary policy as a result of the following:
   1. where a personal relationship has not been declared and results in unfair advantage or disadvantage to either party;
   2. where a staff member abuses their authority or influence to bring benefit or detriment to another individual;
   3. where a personal relationship has not been declared and brings (insert employer name) into disrepute;
   4. where there has been a breach in confidentiality;
   5. 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.