



**LORDSHIP LANE**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

## School Relationships at Work Policy

Statutory or non-statutory	Haringey Policy adapted for LLPS	Date reviewed	Date of next review
Non-Statutory	Yes	Spring 2025	As updated by Haringey

### Date of issue:

This policy has been developed through a process of consultation with the relevant recognised Trade Unions and due to the complexities of this area of employment and education law, the Local Authority expects all Governing Bodies of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools to adopt this policy without amendment.

Should, exceptionally, a Governing Body seek to amend this recommended document or adopt an alternative procedure, the Governing Body must undertake formal consultation collectively with the Secretaries of the recognised Trade Unions and confirm any amendments with the Local Authority via Haringey Schools HR

This document is also strongly recommended for consideration for adoption by Foundation and Aided Schools.

**Introduction:**

This policy sets out our approach to close personal relationships at work. We recognise that relationships of a non-professional nature may develop or exist between people who work together. Close personal relationships at work are a normal part of life and you are entitled to a private life. At the same time, we are committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect.

It is important for us to ensure that staff behave in an appropriate, professional and responsible manner at work and that any close personal relationship does not compromise this.

**Scope of policy:**

This policy applies to anyone working for us. This includes employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices and is available to all staff to support them in ensuring that acceptable professional boundaries between individual employees and students as well as relationships with individuals who work together are maintained.

**Policy aims:**

This policy aims to: -

- protect employees against potential claims of favoritism, bias or prejudice where one has a supervisory or managerial responsibility for the other;
- avoid situations where there is potential for conflict of interest;
- ensure that situations do not develop where other employees feel unable to speak openly and honestly, or feel that a relationship is having an adverse impact on their own employment;
- avoid the potential for fraudulent activity;
- facilitate and encourage the development of an organisational culture where employees feel confident to voluntarily declare personal relationships;
- minimise the risk of problems arising, to provide employees and managers with clear guidance as to their responsibilities and to ensure that issues arising from or involving close personal relationships are dealt with promptly, sensitively and effectively;
- ensure that all employees feel confident of fair and consistent treatment without the concern that a close personal relationship, including if they are part of such a relationship, will adversely influence their or other employees treatment at work or wider working relationships;
- ensure that all employees are clear as to the standards of behaviour that are expected of them and the professional boundaries that must be respected in that relationship.

**Principles**

Employees may normally continue to work together in the same team or department for so long as they both maintain the highest standards of behaviour and conduct in not allowing that relationship to adversely affect the functioning of the team, the treatment of other employees or the education of our children. It is expected that employees will behave responsibly and not put themselves in a position where their close personal relationships may adversely impact on their employment with the school or the services that we provide.

Whilst it is recognised that staff would establish rapport with children and parents/carers, they are also responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries between themselves, children and parents/carers. It is essential that all interactions between children, parents/carers and staff are viewed and maintained in terms of a professional relationship.

**Roles and Responsibilities****Governing body:**

The governing body has a legal responsibility for school policies and for ensuring that they are carried out effectively.

**Headteacher/Managers:**

Will be responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with this policy and procedures contained

within it.

Are responsible for promoting a culture of openness and transparency regarding personal relationships at work.

**Employees:**

Will be individually responsible for ensuring that any close personal relationship at work does not interfere with their duties and responsibilities and does not give rise to a conflict of interest, abuse of power or more or less favourable treatment.

Are asked to work positively with the school to accommodate any reasonable changes to their work arrangements that are required in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest through personal relationships at work.

**School Human Resources Provider:**

Providing support and guidance to staff, headteacher and managers on the implementation and application of this policy.

Working with headteacher and managers to identify appropriate mechanisms and interventions needed to satisfactorily resolve matters of this kind.

**Recruitment**

The School's Safer Recruitment Policy is designed to ensure objectivity and equality of opportunity throughout the recruitment and selection process and has been developed to safeguard these principles and participants in the process, where the relationship between applicant and recruitment/selection decision makers may present a risk of conflict of interest [e.g. where applicants are close friends or relatives of the recruiting manager or panel members].

All applicants for positions within the school must declare on their application form if they are related to a governor or have a relationship with the headteacher or employee of the school, stating the relationship.

Where a relationship between applicant and recruitment/selection decision makers may present a risk of conflict of interest (e.g. where applicants are close friends or relatives of the recruiting manager or panel members), a panel member must notify the headteacher [in the case of the headteacher, the chair of governors must be notified].

Advice may be sought from the school's Human Resources provider where further clarification is required.

Once appointed, if an employee is found to have failed to declare a relationship on their application form with an employee who was involved in the recruitment process or with whom they now have a line management or subordinate working relationship, this will be investigated under School's staff disciplinary procedures and may lead to disciplinary action.

If an individual is appointed to a position where they will either generate or authorise the ordering of goods or services, including the payment of invoices, or expenses of another employee with whom they have a close personal relationship this must be declared in writing and brought to the attention of the headteacher immediately [or the chair of governors in the case of a headteacher] to enable alternative authorising arrangements to be made.

**Conduct at work**

If you are involved in a close personal relationship with a work colleague, contractor, parents/carers, customer or supplier, you must not allow that relationship to influence your conduct while at work.

You must ensure that any personal relationship at work does not have an adverse effect on your work, give rise to a conflict of interest, or provide any other workplace advantage.

Intimate behaviour during work time, such as holding hands, kissing, other close physical contact

and discussions of a sexual nature is not permitted. For the avoidance of doubt, this applies during any period that you are working.

You must ensure that any confidential information that you have access to is always protected. Any adverse impact on your own work, the team's work or the functioning of the school is not acceptable, such as:

Neglecting work

Communicating confidential, sensitive or inappropriate information to each other. Any breach of confidentiality will be treated very seriously, and even inadvertent disclosure will be dealt with under our Disciplinary procedure.

Behaving in a way that may cause difficulty or embarrassment to others, for example arguing in the workplace or open displays of affection

Not communicating with each other as a result of disagreement or the breakdown of the relationship.

It is not the relationship itself which is not acceptable, which is why all employees are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times.

### **Declaring a personal relationship**

If you enter into a personal relationship with a work colleague which may give rise to a conflict of interest, you must declare your relationship to the headteacher and your HR provider. Any information that you disclose will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

### **Conflict of interest**

Where one party has access to confidential information or is in a position of authority over the other, or there is a potential conflict of interest situation, as an employer, we reserve the right to make a decision in the interest of the school. These principles apply to an individual who begins a close personal relationship with a client, customer, contractor or supplier.

### **Disciplinary Issues**

Employees must not be involved in any investigation, hearing or other decisions involving another employee with whom they have a close personal relationship. This conflict of interest should be declared as soon as the employee is approached to participate in proceedings. Failure to do so may result in action under the school's disciplinary procedures.

In situations when one employee in a relationship is subject to an investigation under the school's procedures such as disciplinary or grievance, a risk assessment should be completed. This is both to ensure that a thorough and fair investigation is possible and to protect that employee from any false accusations that they might be impeding the investigation.

Where a member of staff in a relationship with another staff member is involved in a workplace investigation (e.g. disciplinary, dispute resolution), the staff member may discuss the case with their partner if they wish to. There is an expectation that the terms of confidentiality outlined as part of the investigation would then extend to the staff member not directly involved in the investigation. If guidance or support is required by either staff member, they should contact the headteacher or their trade union representative.

### **Personal relationship breakdowns**

If the close personal relationship breaks down, all employees involved will ensure that no acts that could be interpreted as arguments or disagreements occur at work. Such employees are encouraged to discuss the situation with their line manager/s.

The employees will ensure that their personal relationship breakdown does not bring the reputation of the school into disrepute. An example of a breach of this would be if an employee deliberately damaged a former partner's property, even outside of working hours. Any other behaviour that could or did lead to a prosecution or caution by the police would fall into this category.

Employees are reminded that if they are suffering from emotional stress from a personal relationship breakdown (regardless of whether it was a personal relationship at work) they may access the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Any concerns around domestic violence or abuse should be reported to the headteacher or the Police if necessary.

### **Raising Concerns**

Any employee who feels that a close personal relationship is adversely affecting their employment, the functioning of their team or the services we provide is encouraged to share their concerns at the earliest opportunity with their line manager or a member of the leadership team or Headteacher if they prefer. Where an employee is not comfortable with either of these options they may consider raising their concerns under the school's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure. This also applies to employees in a close personal relationship who feel they are being disadvantaged because of the relationship.

If you have any other complaint about unfair treatment at work due to a personal relationship breakdown, you should raise this with Chair of Governors or you can raise it formally under our Grievance procedure if it applies to you.

## Support and Advice for Employees

There are many sources of support available to employees. These include:

Union representatives (for union members)

School's HR provider

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Document Control

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Author	School HR Team

Revision History			
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<b>Employer</b>	<b>03.02.2026</b>	<b>Policy Recommended to schools for adoption</b>	<b>HR</b>