

# ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

## Personal Relationships Policy

### 1. Introduction

This Policy is intended to provide guidance to all members of staff regarding personal relationships within the College.

For the purposes of this Policy, a personal relationship is one where a member of staff is:

- related to a student or another member of staff at the College;
- in a relationship with a student<sup>1</sup> or another member of staff at the College, where the relationship is more than friendship.

The College recognises that, where personal relationships develop at work, there is a potential for conflict between professional and personal interests. Members of staff are responsible for their own conduct and must declare any potential conflicts of interest. The personal aspects of any personal relationship must be conducted entirely outside of the work environment.

### 2. Relationships between staff and students

It is vital that trust and confidence exist between staff and students to ensure students maximise their learning experience. The professional relationship between a student and a member of staff is a central part of the student's educational development. A personal relationship could compromise this professional relationship and damage the teaching and learning environment for other students and staff.

Members of staff are strongly advised not to enter into a sexual/romantic relationship with any student they are responsible for teaching, supervising or assessing. It is unprofessional for a member of staff to seek actively to initiate such a relationship without regard to the problems that may ensue.

If a consensual relationship does develop between a member of staff and a student for whom they have responsibility for teaching, supervising or assessing, the member of staff must declare the relationship to either the Artistic Director or the Director of Programmes & Research or to their Head of Faculty/line manager, without delay. Any such disclosure will be treated sensitively.

The College reserves the right to discontinue the responsibility of a member of staff for teaching, supervising or assessing a student with whom they have a personal relationship. Any such step would be taken in consultation with the member of staff and the student.

### 3. Physical contact in teaching

Physical contact between professor and student is sometimes necessary for the student's learning (eg to correct poor posture or to adjust bow hold). Its purpose and form should be explained to the student by the professor and the student's consent obtained in advance of physical contact taking place. In this context, as in all others, a professor should be sensitive to feedback from their student and should respond accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy a 'student' is an adult student of the senior College, ie over the age of 18. The Junior Department has a child protection policy which applies to all of its students.

## 4. Relationships between members of staff

Personal relationships may exist or may develop between members of staff. If one of the members of staff is or will be responsible for managing, auditing, appraising or authorising the work of the other, each member of staff should declare the relationship without delay to their respective line managers. This also applies where one of the individuals is a contractor or consultant and the other member of staff is responsible for that contractor's/consultant's work.

The College reserves the right to make arrangements to discontinue the situation of a member of staff being responsible for managing, auditing, appraising or authorising the work of the other. Any measures taken would be in full consultation with the members of staff concerned and would be with a view to reaching agreement.

There is no need for the College to know of personal relationships in other circumstances, even if the two members of staff work in the same department.

## 5. Appropriate behaviour at work

The College requires that the personal aspects of relationships must be conducted with discretion and outside the professional environment.

The College has a separate policy on Behaviour at Work, which it uses to deal with allegations of harassment or bullying, as well as its staff disciplinary procedure. All allegations of harassment or bullying are taken seriously and addressed promptly.

## 6. Applicants for employment

Internal or external applicants for employment are expected to inform the Head of Human Resources in writing if they have a personal relationship with any member of staff currently employed by the College, where one party may be responsible for managing, auditing or authorising the work of the other, or with any student whom they may be required to teach, supervise or assess.

## 7. Confidentiality

If a member of staff, student or applicant for employment discloses a personal relationship, this information will be treated with due respect to the right of the individuals to a private life. Only those who need to know will be informed.

## 8. Failure to declare a personal relationship

Failure to declare a personal relationship in any of the circumstances outlined in this policy where this is required, may result in disciplinary action being taken against a member of staff.

## 9. Conservatoires UK Principles of Best Practice in Conservatoire Teaching

The RCM has adopted the Conservatoires UK Principles of Best Practice in Conservatoire Teaching. These set out principles of best practice which apply to teaching scenarios involving students who are 18 years of age or over. They are reflected in this policy and the full CUK document can be found on Muse and the RCM website with this policy.

*Policy approved by RCM Council – 1 December 2004;*

*updated February 2013 and June 2013*