

# 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 his or her 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.

---

<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.

### **3. 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.

### **4. 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.

### **5. 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.

### **6. 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.

### **7. 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.