

Personal Relationships Policy

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Lead Contact	Laura Naldrett, Head of HR
Approval by	Finance and General Purposes and Academic Board



Personal Relationships Policy

Scope and Purpose

1.1 This policy sets out the expectations and obligations of staff of The Place with respect to personal and intimate relationships regardless of sexual orientation and identity. This policy is intended to ensure that appropriate safeguards and processes are in place to prevent abuses of those relationships. It seeks to protect staff and students from allegations of actual or perceived conflicts of interest, and to limit circumstances where a position of power may be abused or perceived to be abused.

1.2 Students should be made aware of the contents of this policy and it will be available on a relevant VLE page and covered within induction processes. Students have no obligations under this policy but should seek guidance from the Student Support team if they feel any of their relationships are covered in this policy

1.3. Definitions:

“Staff” as defined here as all contracted employees, hourly paid staff and those directly engaged on freelance contracts for services.

“Salaried staff” covers all individuals on a contract of employment with The Place either permanent or fixed term. This also includes Trainee contracts.

“Hourly paid LCDS staff” includes all staff engaged as teachers, accompanists, physical support staff, learning support staff, administrative staff, costume staff and technicians on LCDS related activity. Freelance Artists, workshop leaders, supervisors, facilitators and assessors are also included in this definition. This is not an exhaustive list.

“Other staff” includes all staff engaged as hourly paid or freelances who do not work directly on LCDS activity.

“Students” as defined here as all registered students of London Contemporary Dance School, postgraduate and undergraduate, both part time and full time. This also covers any students undertaking study abroad or exchange arrangements.

1.4 Individuals who are both staff and students will be classified according to their primary purpose of being at The Place.

- Current LCDS students who also work in casual roles at The Place, will **not** be considered as staff within this policy.
- Staff who undertake studies at LCDS in the course of their employment, eg Postgraduate qualifications will not be considered as students.

1.5 For this policy a close personal relationship is defined as any one of the following, however this list should not be considered exhaustive:

- A consensual intimate, romantic or sexual relationship which goes beyond the boundaries of a platonic or working relationship which could be brief, long term or a one off occurrence.
- A relationship with a family member or close family friend
- A very close friendship
- A relationship where there is a financial dependence

A close business, financial or commercial relationship

1.6 This policy is explained to salaried staff in the central induction process and to hourly paid staff as part of the LCDS guest teacher induction. It is also referred to in all contracts and is available for all staff to refer to on The Place's SharePoint site or the webpage listing relevant policies for hourly paid staff. <https://theplace.org.uk/freelancer-and-hourly-paid-staff-resources-2>

2 Restrictions

2.1 Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with someone who is under 18 years even if that person is over the age of consent (16 or over).

2.2 In addition, Close personal or intimate relationships between all salaried Place staff and hourly paid LCDS staff and LCDS students are prohibited;

2.3. Relationships between LCDS students and other staff are discouraged and must be declared if they exist (see section 5).

2.4 Where there is a pre-existing relationship between any staff member and an LCDS student, this must be disclosed by the staff member before the relevant party joins the organisation so this can be reviewed.

3. Relationships with Students or Staff Under the Age of 18 or Who are an “Adult at Risk”

3.1 Members of staff must not be in, or enter into, a close personal or intimate relationship with a student or staff member under the age of 18, or an adult known or suspected to be vulnerable, for whom they have any responsibility for, or involvement in, that person’s academic studies and/or personal welfare.

3.2 Staff must not engage in sexual behaviour with someone with whom they are in a position of trust. Whilst a young person can consent to sexual activity once they reach the age of 16, the Sexual Offences Act (2003) makes it a criminal offence for a person to engage in sexual activity of any kind with a person under the age of 18, where the adult is in a position of trust.

3.3 Anyone suspecting a member of staff of acting inappropriately towards a student or staff member or vice versa under the age of 18 or an adult at risk should refer to the [Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Policy](#) and contact the Senior Safeguarding Officer and a relevant Deputy Safeguarding Officer from the team who may contact the local authority designated officer and/or the police.

4. Relationships Between Staff and Students

4.1 In line with OfS condition E6, The Place prohibits close personal and intimate relationships between staff and students where the staff member is a salaried member of staff or an hourly paid LCDS member of staff. This applies to preexisting relationships prior to either party joining LCDS. This also applies to ‘one off’ instances or where feelings have been communicated.

4.3 Other Staff have an obligation to declare an intimate or close personal relationship with a student to enable The Place to assess whether any potential or actual conflict of interest exists and to take appropriate action. This will include preexisting relationships before a staff member or student commences at The Place.

4.4 A staff member is accountable to declare any personal interest or previous intimate relationship even if this relationship was prior to their employment or study at The Place and has since ended.

4.5 In order to maintain appropriate relationships with students, and to help reduce the risk of sexual misconduct, abuse of power or conflict of interest, staff should:

- Maintain an appropriate physical and emotional distance from students and perform their duties without favour towards any individual student over another student
- Avoid creating special friendships with students as this may be considered to be grooming. This could include special friendships with a view to establishing an intimate relationship following graduation
- Use only their work email account, telephone, IT software and applications and internet access for communication with students. Please also refer to the **Communications Guidelines for staff and Students** [\[link\]](#)
- Set an example by writing and communicating with students in a professional and business style. All communications must adhere to GDPR regulations.
- Adhere to The Place's Social Media policies and guidelines
- Staff are encouraged to use their work telephone numbers which may then be diverted to the staff member's personal mobile as needed. The IT Team can advise on how to do this. Please also refer to the staff and student communication guidelines.
- Adhere to these guidelines, where logistically possible, when participating in events outside of the premises of The Place. Flag any concerns relating to this to their line manager so appropriate risk measures can be put in place.

4.6. Where staff have a primary role of providing supervision, teaching, or pastoral care to students (including personal tutors), staff should:

- Where possible, ensure that meetings and discussions occur on The Place premises;
- Refer students with support needs to the student support team and limit their role in providing such support to a student where this is not part of employment duties
- Refrain from contacting students outside of reasonable working hours. These are normally 0800-1800 during weekdays unless there are planned performances or activities outside these hours.

- Not seek personal information from a student except where it is relevant to an academic process (e.g. medical information for special consideration, or personal circumstances information as part of an academic progress procedure)
- Remember that perceptions of a power relationship will persist for some time after graduation and bear this in mind when establishing future relationships with students and alumni.

4.7. The following are considered examples of unacceptable behaviour towards students. (The list is not exhaustive):

- Physical touching, that could be construed as sexualized (e.g. touches of the shoulder or squeezes of the leg), or comments or questions of a sexual nature (whether verbally or electronically)
- Paying undue special attention to a particular student which may be seen as grooming
- Accepting gifts from a student, unless it is following final assessment completion and deemed to be a minor token of thanks (see also the [Employee Gifts and Hospitality Policy](#))
- Inviting an individual student to the staff member's private home or room without others present, or visiting the student's home or room, including while at external events
- Asking a student to care for their child, or to house sit whilst on holidays, or perform any other personal services when not formally employed or engaged by The Place to do so

5. Relationships Between Members of Staff and/or others

5.1. Relationships between members of staff are permitted. However, in order to prevent potential abuse of power or perceived or real conflict of interest, staff must declare close personal or intimate relationships in either of the following situations:

- Where a relationship begins that may give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest, exploitation, favouritism or bias
- Where a relationship already exists, and a new situation arises that may give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest, exploitation, favouritism or

bias (e.g. two staff members in a relationship who work in different departments who now work in the same department)

5.2 Relationships between staff in which one has direct or indirect authority or decision making power over another are strongly discouraged. Where staff are in such a situation the relationship must be declared and consideration will be given to how to prevent conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage gained (or perceived to be gained) from the overlap of a personal and professional relationship. This may include finding alternative line management arrangements.

5.3 Where a staff member has a close personal relationship to a job applicant and the staff member is involved in the selection process, the staff member must declare this so mitigations to prevent conflict of interest can be put in place.

5.4 Where staff have a close personal relationship with another individual in a situation where financial transactions are involved this should also be declared.

5.5 In order to maintain appropriate relationships with colleagues/peers, and help reduce the risk of abuse of power or conflict of interest, staff should:

- Maintain an appropriate physical and emotional distance from other staff while working
- Perform their duties without favour towards any individual staff member over another
- Avoid paying undue special attention to a particular member of staff which may be seen as grooming
- Use their work email account, telephone, IT software and applications, and internet access for communication where possible. The use of personal messaging via social media should be avoided
- Ensure all emails and work-related messages are written in a professional manner. All communications must adhere to GDPR regulations.
- Establish boundaries between professional and non-professional communication with colleagues
- Adhere to the same guidelines, where logistically possible, when they are at outside events with other members of staff

- Where possible, ensure that meetings and discussions occur in appropriate locations at The Place
- Refer staff with support needs to a relevant support service, via the HR Team and limit their role in providing personal support to a staff member where this is not part of employment duties

5.6. When an intimate relationship ends it is expected that all parties will continue to conduct themselves in a professional manner and avoid personal disputes that may impact on the working environment or on other staff or students. It may also be appropriate for some of the actions, put in place during the relationship to continue for a period of time following the end of the relationship. The staff concerned will be consulted and required to comply with reasonable actions.

6 Unprofessional, inappropriate Conduct

6.1 Unprofessional or inappropriate conduct towards a student or staff member will not be tolerated. This may breach the Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy or the Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Policy.

6.2 A student or member of staff should seek advice and support immediately if they feel they have been subject to unprofessional or inappropriate conduct from a student or another member of staff, by speaking to the HR or Student Support Teams.

- Staff should feel safe to self-report if they believe a student, or another staff member, has an intimate interest in them, in order to be able to protect themselves in the working environment.
- Supportive measures will be taken to be placed to guide the members of staff and enable them not to work directly with the student or staff member thus avoiding any uncomfortable situation arising. This situation will be monitored very carefully to prevent harassment or an incident occurring.

6.3 In the case of staff members that are pursued or fantasised by students, support will be provided and protective measures put in place to protect both parties. This will be dealt with under the [Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).

7. Declaration of Intimate or Close Personal Relationships

7.1 All declarations in line with this policy are to be made as soon as reasonably practicable on the start of the relationship or intimate situation.

7.2 As the declaration contains sensitive personal data it will be stored securely and managed in compliance with data protection legislation. Such declarations will be treated respectfully, sensitively and confidentially, and the wishes of both parties respected as far as is possible. This includes same-sex relationships where the parties may not be “out” publicly.

7.3 Staff who are unsure whether they have a close personal or intimate relationship with a student, staff member or other relevant individual, should seek advice from the Head of HR or Director of Registry and Student Wellbeing at the earliest opportunity. Staff are particularly encouraged to seek advice if the other party expressly does not wish the relationship to be reported.

7.4 Staff must complete the Personal Relationship Declaration Form at Appendix 2 below.

- Step 1 – Staff should submit the form to the Head of HR who will review the form and where appropriate and necessary, consult with the parties and the Line Manager/ Department Director on what actions, if any, are required
- Step 2 – The actions will be documented on the form and copies provided to the relevant parties. The form will be stored securely on the member(s) of staff's HR file.
- Step 3 – Any actions needed will be agreed by HR, the line manager and Department Director and documented.

7.5 In the event of a relationship between a salaried staff member or hourly paid LCDS staff member being declared, the matter will be managed by the Department Director under the The Place's Disciplinary Policy (staff) or Non-academic misconduct policy (students) taking the guidance in section 7 into consideration. Support should be given to both parties throughout the process and following the agreed conclusion.

7.5. In putting in place measures to manage any conflict of interest, the following will be considered:

- Any known vulnerability of either individual
- Both individuals' personal circumstances at the time
- Any special family, kinship and elder relationships
- The nature of the two individuals' contact in employment/work



- The potential for either individual to influence the nature of work, workload, or career of the other
- The extent of the power imbalance between the two individuals

7.6. Both parties will be notified of the conflict of interest management measures put in place.

8. Breach of Policy

8.1 A close personal or intimate relationship with a student or staff member under the age of 18, or an adult known or suspected to be vulnerable is in breach of this policy and will be investigated under the safeguarding and disciplinary procedures.

8.2. . A close personal or intimate relationship between a salaried Place staff member /hourly paid LCDS staff member and LCDS students is a breach of this policy and will be investigated under the disciplinary procedure

8.3. Failure to disclosure a close personal or intimate relationship between another staff member and a student, is in breach of this policy and will be investigated under the disciplinary procedure.

8.4 Failure to disclosure a close personal or intimate relationship between staff members where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest is in breach of this policy and will be investigated under the disciplinary procedure.

Appendix 1 Definitions Abuse of Power

Abuse of power is where someone uses their position of power or authority in an unacceptable manner. Abuse of power can take various forms and may include, but is not limited to, grooming, manipulation, coercion, putting pressure on others to engage in conduct they do not feel comfortable with.

Adult at Risk

An adult at risk is someone over the age of 18 who receives or may need community care services by reason of disability or illness and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation. This can relate to physical, mental or psychological wellbeing or the potential to be drawn into sexual or criminal exploitation and activity.

Close Personal Relationships

A close personal relationship is a relative or close family friend, or a relationship where there is financial dependence.

Consent to an Intimate Relationship

Consent is agreeing by choice and having the freedom and capacity to make that choice. The person seeking consent should always take steps to ensure that consent is freely given, that it is informed and recognises that it can be withdrawn at any time.

Freedom to Consent: a person is free to make a choice if nothing negative would happen to them if they said no. For example, a person is not free to choose if:

- They are being threatened with violence (by the perpetrator and/or by someone else)
- They are being threatened with humiliation
- They believe that the continuation or assessment of their studies, or progression or advancement of their career, will be at risk, if they refused
- They are being blackmailed
- There is a significant power imbalance and the party without power feels pressured to continue in the relationship against their will.

Capacity to Consent: Capacity is about whether someone is physically and/or mentally able to make a choice and to understand the consequences of that choice. For example, a person does not have the capacity to give consent if they are asleep or unconscious. A person's capacity to consent may be inhibited by the influence of drugs or alcohol or the presence of a cognitive or learning difficulty, or mental health condition.

Grooming: Grooming can be defined as a gradual process that someone in a position of power uses to manipulate someone to do things that they may not be comfortable with and to make them less likely to reject or report abusive behaviour.

Grooming will initially start as befriending someone and making them feel special and may result in sexual abuse and/or exploitation.

Intimate Relationships: An intimate relationship is a consensual romantic or sexual relationship which goes beyond the bounds of a platonic or working relationship. An intimate relationship could be brief and includes a one-off occurrence.

Position of Trust: Any staff member working closely with children, young people or adults at risk, is in a position of trust.

Fantasize- Where a person has emotions or sexual desire towards another person. Has been known as a behaviour students can adopt towards staff members or towards people with inspiring experience in the field of the profession in which they are training. Cases of imagined relationships, gifting, stalking can occur that are outside the boundaries of healthy respect and behaviors.

SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY STAFF / STUDENT

Students: Please complete this form and send it securely to the Director of Registry and Student Wellbeing The member of staff will also need to complete their own form.

Staff: Please complete this form and send it securely to the Head of HR. Both parties must complete their own form.

Your Details:	
Name:	
Are you a student or member of staff?	
Line Manager/Personal Tutor's Name:	
Position and Department (If Staff):	
Programme (If Student):	
Other Party's Details:	
Name:	
Are they a student or a member of staff?	
Position and Department (If Staff):	
Programme (If Student):	
Nature of Relationship:	
Please state whether the relationship is of a close personal nature (e.g. a close friend or relative), or an intimate /romantic relationship.	
In the case of a close personal relationship, please specify your relationship to each other (e.g. cousin, parent, friend etc.).	
In the case of an intimate/romantic relationship, please specify when the intimate/romantic relationship started (approximate month/year):	

I understand the following:

1. It may be necessary for permanent or temporary adjustments to be made to any supervisory arrangements or other conditions, to remove any real or perceived conflict of interest arising from the relationship.
2. This information will be stored securely and managed in compliance with data protection legislation.
3. I have read and understood the **Personal Relationships Policy**

For intimate / romantic relationships:

I have read and understood The Place's policy on **Preventing Sexual Misconduct, Bullying and Harassment**.

Signed (electronic signature):

Print Name:

Date:

Staff should submit this form to the Head of HR who will discuss the form with their line manager and/or Department Director.

Students should submit this form to the Director of Registry and Student Wellbeing who will discuss the form with the staff member's line manager, Department Director and Head of HR.

SECTION B:

To be completed by the Head of HR in conjunction with line manager and staff member for staff declarations.

To be completed by the Director of Registry and Student Wellbeing in conjunction with the line manager and Head of HR for student declarations.

Has this relationship been declared within one month	Y/N
If no, why not?	
Is action or a conflict of interest management plan required?	Y/N



Reasons for recommended plan	
Details of action/plan	

Electronic Signature:

Print Name:

Job title:

Date: