

## **Personal relationships between Staff and Students Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 A personal relationship between a member of staff and a student gives rise to an actual or apparent conflict of interest. In particular, such a relationship creates, or may reasonably be perceived to create, a risk of favouritism or abuse of authority. It also undermines the relationship of trust and confidence which is intrinsic to interactions between staff and students.
- 1.2 Members of staff are under a duty to act with integrity and not to place themselves in a position of actual or apparent conflict. A personal relationship in the circumstances described above should consequently be avoided.

### **2. Scope of policy**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members of staff of Homerton College.
- 2.2 For the purpose of this policy, a 'member of staff' includes any person who is engaged by Homerton College as an employee or worker and/or who holds a College office or post, as well as any person to whom the College makes available any of the privileges or facilities normally afforded to its employees - where graduate students are working for the College in a teaching or related capacity, this policy will apply to them in that capacity as if they were employees of the College.

### **3. Personal relationship defined**

- 3.1 A 'personal relationship' means any association, however brief, of a sexual or other intimate nature, either in person or remotely (for example, via social media, email or text messaging).
- 3.2 In this context, 'student' includes any person pursuing a course of study leading to the award of a degree, diploma, or certificate of the University of Cambridge.

### **4. Process for declaring a personal relationship**

- 4.1 For the purpose of this policy, a 'professional connection' means any arrangement where a person in their capacity as a member of staff has any academic, pastoral or administrative or similar responsibility for a student, including for supervising, tutoring, teaching, selecting, assessing, protecting, safeguarding, or providing a reference for the student.
- 4.2 In the event that a personal relationship arises between a member of staff and a student with whom that member of staff also has a professional connection; and/or a personal relationship arises between a member of staff and a student with whom the member of staff is due to have a professional connection, the relationship must be disclosed immediately as follows:

- The member of staff in question must disclose the relationship to the Senior Tutor and/or Principal or (if the member of staff would prefer) to another senior College Officer eg Vice-Principal, or the HR Manager who will speak to the Senior Tutor.
- Following disclosure, the Senior Tutor will ensure, as appropriate, that the student is aware of the disclosure and that alternative arrangements are put in place to avoid the member of staff having any professional connection with the student.

## **5. Failure to disclose**

- 5.1 If a member of staff is unsure whether or not a relationship with a student should be disclosed under this policy, the member of staff should disclose it.
- 5.2 Failure to comply with this policy, or any arrangements which are put in place under it, may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

## **6. Expected conduct**

- 6.1 No member of staff as defined in 2.2 above, with the exception of graduate students and students in a sabbatical role who are temporarily employed by the College eg HUS President, will be allowed to enter student accommodation unless it is a requirement of their role.
- 6.2 No student will be allowed in staff living accommodation where the member of staff has accommodation on-site, with the exception of those excluded in point 6.1 above.
- 6.3 Members of staff as defined in 2.2 above, with the exception of graduate students and students in a sabbatical role who are temporarily employed by the College, will not mix socially with students in common areas or shared facilities for example the Griffin Bar or Great Hall unless in the event of a formal/official social occasion. We acknowledge the normal socialising aspects of College between students and fellows, eg subject dinners and any social interaction following participation in team events, and do not want to discourage these (official) occasions. If any student or member of staff feel uncomfortable as a result of any of these events, they can get in touch with their Tutor, the Senior Tutor or HR Manager. Concerns can also be raised by making use of the [Dignity at work Policy](#), [Students Complaints procedure](#); or the [Student Harassment and Assault Guidelines](#).
- 6.4 For the avoidance of doubt, members of staff are still welcome to use the common facilities to socialise with other colleagues and have friendly conversations with students. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the line between conversing with students versus regular socialising is not crossed to the extent that it makes anybody feel uncomfortable.
- 6.5 The examples of expected conduct outlined in 6.1 to 6.4 above are not conclusive. Please speak to the Senior Tutor or HR Manager if you have any questions about acceptable conduct.
- 6.6 In the event of any concerns raised by other students and/or members of staff about a relationship or perceived relationship, HR and the applicable line manager will discuss these concerns with the employee to identify any appropriate steps to address this; and the Senior Tutor and/or Tutor will discuss concerns and appropriate steps or actions with the student.

Policy change history:

| <b>Date</b>   | <b>Summary of Changes</b>       | <b>Date of next review</b> |
|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| February 2022 | New policy, approved by Council | February 2024              |