



**Ivington C of E
Primary and
Pre-school**

*Reaching together with the Fruit of the
Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)*

Close Personal Relationships Policy

Approval of the Governing Body

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for:

Close Personal Relationships Policy

at

Ivington CE (VA) Primary and Pre-school

It was revised during the:

Spring 2024

It has been agreed and is supported by the teaching staff and the governing body.

We aim to review this policy during the:

Spring 2027

Or sooner if necessary



Linking with our Vision – Reaching together with Love, Joy and Peace (Galatians 5:22-23)

To provide a caring, Christian ethos for the school, which inspires and excites a shared enthusiasm for life and learning.

At Ivington CE Primary and Pre-school, through our strong Christian ethos and focus on nine important Christian values, we are committed to providing a deeply nourishing, spiritual, ambitious, and broad curriculum.

Our motto, 'Reaching together' underpins our belief in equality of opportunity for all, where we actively endeavour to promote understanding and appreciation of our diverse society and give each child a special place in the world where they feel valued, essential to our community and equipped with the necessary skills to make a positive contribution.

We perceive our role to be opening a 'Window on the World', through which our pupils are actively encouraged to develop respect for the beliefs and cultures which enrich their everyday lives and encourage others to do likewise.

We strive to eliminate inequality through our deep Christian ethos of respect and understanding of all groups in society, which ensures that everyone at Ivington will be treated fairly despite his or her creed, colour, disability, or gender.

More details are available in our Inclusion, Racial Equality and Equal Opportunities policies.

The health, safety, and welfare of all the people who work or learn at our school are therefore of fundamental importance. We aim to provide a safe, secure, and pleasant working environment for everyone. The governing body, along with the LA, takes responsibility for protecting the health, safety and welfare of all children and members of staff.

POLICY

As a good employer, the purpose of this policy is to provide clear, consistent and fair procedures that enable the governing body to meet their responsibilities under employment legislation and best practice.

The governing body recognise that some employees have, or will develop, close relationships of a personal nature with other employees, or other individuals associated with school. Assumptions should be avoided at the outset that the working arrangement will be unsatisfactory without exploring the issues. However, such relationships can have an impact on the workplace and this policy sets out how the school will prevent or mitigate their effects.

Where an employee changes role, consideration should be made as to whether this policy should apply.

It is not the intention to discourage people in close personal relationships from working in the school, or to prevent employee development and progress within the organisation.

Further, it is acknowledged that where close personal relationships occur the majority of employees behave in a highly professional manner. However, such relationships in the workplace can sometimes lead to problems such as conflict of interest or allegations of favouritism.

This policy is intended to provide an outline of the expectations on employees and their managers so that such situations are dealt with sensitively, fairly and consistently.

The provisions of this policy are built on the council's Code of Conduct adopted by the school and Professional Bodies' codes and are intended to avoid any possible conflict of interest, perception or accusation of bias, favouritism, or prejudice.

It is also intended to protect employees in such situations so that they are able to defend allegations of impropriety, bias, abuse of authority, conflicts of interest or fraud.

SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to all employees who work in a maintained school, but can be applied to Voluntary Aided, trust Schools and Academy schools. All Community and Voluntary Controlled schools where the Local Authority is the legal employer must follow this policy and procedure. The governance arrangements for Voluntary Aided, Trust schools and Academies are different in that the governing body is the legal employer as opposed to the Local Authority. Therefore, the procedure may be varied in accordance with the arrangements at the school. Voluntary Aided Schools should, of course, keep the Diocesan Authorities informed of any action they intend to take. Where Voluntary Aided, Trust Schools and Academies develop their own arrangements for managing personal relationships in their school, these arrangements must be communicated to HR Services.

The operation of this policy may cross into other school policy.

DEFINITION

Close personal relationships means:

- Close family relationships such as spouses, same or opposite sex partners, civil partnerships, parents, siblings, children, nephews, nieces, uncles, aunts, god parents (or equivalent), or
- Close personal friendships, including romantic attachments and 'extra-marital' relationships
- These definitions are not exhaustive and the policy should be viewed as covering any relationship between workers with the potential to impact on working relationships.

PROCEDURE

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Candidates should declares a personal relationship with an employee, school governor, contractor, person in a partner school, or other person presenting a potential conflict of interest.

If the relationship is with the Recruiting Manager, they will discuss the situation with their Head teacher or nominated representative (or chair of governors if involving the Head teacher) to agree alternative arrangements for shortlisting and interview so that they are not involved in making the recruitment or selection decision. A written note of the decision will be made and kept with the appointment details.

If the relationship is with another member of the team, the Recruiting Manager will ensure that the team member is not involved in the selection process.

The applicant will undergo the normal selection process. If interviewed, one of the questions they will be asked is how they would see the working relationship operating with the other person.

If the applicant is appointed, the current employee in the team needs to inform their manager of the relationship who will consider the possible conflicts of interest or operational difficulties that may arise and discuss the situation with the employee in a prompt and sensitive manner. The manager should record any actions taken to avoid future conflicts or operational difficulties. The Head teacher or nominated representative (or chair of governors) will be involved as required.

No interview panel should comprise solely of two people who have a close personal relationship.

DAY TO DAY MANAGEMENT

Employees/workers should inform their Head teacher or nominated representative of relationships described below, or where the relationship is with the Head teacher, to the chair of governors.

Relationship between the line manager and the employee/worker

The Head teacher or nominated representative (or chair of governors) will sensitively discuss and clarify with both of them the working arrangements that will be put in place. It is important, however, to ensure that any approach or actions are not unfair or discriminatory, i.e. avoid any assumptions at the outset that the working arrangement will be unsatisfactory without exploring the issues. Nevertheless, it is important to explore the issues that may arise to ensure these can be managed effectively.

In this situation the line manager should not have sole responsibility for the following transactions and decisions relating to that employee/worker (note: this list is not exhaustive):

- processing payment documents e.g. timesheets, overtime, unsocial hours, honoraria, or changes to terms and conditions e.g. revised hours, grades or incremental points progression
- authorising study leave and/or funding
- authorising annual leave
- authorising payments for orders of stock, equipment or services
- carrying out performance appraisals or 1:1s
- conducting recruitment and selection procedures
- acting as a work referee for job applications etc.
- investigating alleged complaints
- conducting hearings or formal meetings in relation to sickness absence, disciplinary matters, grievances or poor performance
- leading work which will require organisational change, and may subsequently have an impact on the security or design of roles within the area the employee works or manages.

The appropriate arrangements may be that the Head teacher or nominated representative will take responsibility for these transactions and decisions. A record will be made of the arrangements mutually agreed and it should be placed on personal file. Where the Head teacher is involved, this will be the chair of governors' responsibility.

Requests from employees in a relationship to take leave at the same time will be accommodated wherever practical. However, there may sometimes be difficulties in achieving this as service requirements, the needs of the team and other team members must also be considered.

The same principle applies to other requests for time off for which the manager has discretion to agree.

Relationship between team members (employees and workers)

Relationships, as defined, may form between colleagues in the same team during the course of their employment. Such situations should be managed with care and sensitivity in the interest of all concerned. It is important however to ensure that any approach or actions are not unfair or discriminatory.

It is acknowledged that work related friendships are quite naturally formed in the workplace. Any employee/worker is therefore expected to exercise judgement as to whether or not the relationship has developed to such an extent that it can be described as a close personal relationship, which could potentially raise the issue that this policy seeks to address. Failure to disclose a personal relationship could leave an employee open to allegations of misconduct should subsequent issues arise.

When an employee/worker informs their Head teacher or chair of governors of a relationship the Head teacher or chair of governors will consider the possible conflicts of interest or operational difficulties that may arise and refer to the Head teacher or nominated representative (or chair of governors) as appropriate.

The manager will sensitively explore the relevant issues with the individuals concerned, referring them to this policy, ensuring that the employees are aware of their responsibilities and take action to avoid any conflicts. The Head teacher or chair of governors should keep a record of the discussions and it should be placed on personal file of both employees.

Expectations should be clearly defined and managed as appropriate.

Relationship outside the immediate team (employees and workers)

In other parts of the school

If there is a 'day to day' working relationship both employees/workers will inform their respective manager of the situation. This should also include 'one off' situations for example, work on a specific project.

The managers will liaise with each other and the Head teacher or nominated representative (or chair of governors), as appropriate, to determine what, if any, action to take (see above), and then explore sensitively with the employees the relevant issues. A record will be made of the arrangements mutually agreed.

Expectations should be clearly defined and managed as appropriate.

Managers should be particularly careful if one of the parties to the relationship is under the age of 18 and may be more susceptible to those in a perceived position of power/seniority. Advice should be sought from HR Services.

Contractors

The employee/worker will inform their Head teacher or nominated representative (or chair of governors) of the relationship who will assess the situation and discuss with a manager within the contracting organisation as appropriate.

If the employee is in a position to influence the award or monitoring of a contract, arrangements will be put in place to ensure that they do not have final or sole responsibility for the decision and / or monitoring.

Relationship between an employee/worker and a child up to 18

It is illegal for a person in a position of power to groom or have a sexual relationship with a child less than 18 years of age. Head teachers or chair of governors must instigate the Local Safeguarding Children Procedure if this is suspected.

Refer to the code of conduct for all categories of school policy section 6.6 regarding School personnel with children at the school they work at.

Relationship with a parent of a child within the school / socialising with pupils

Employees should disclose to the Head teacher where they have a close personal relationship with a parent of a child at the school, or where their own children are friends with children from the school. Failure to disclose a personal relationship could leave an employee open to allegations of misconduct, especially where they are socialising and/or in contact with a pupil outside of their professional capacity.

MANAGING TEAM OR SERVICE DIFFICULTIES

If working relationships within a team become unsettled or tense because of the existence of a close personal relationship, it is the Head teacher or chair of governors' responsibility to take appropriate action, including referral to the Head teacher or nominated representative. For example, this may be because of complaints from other team members that the relationship causes ineffective decision making, or because of the fall out due to the breakdown of the relationship.

The Head teacher or chair of governors will initially seek to deal with such situations informally. They should raise this informally with both parties, explaining the service and or team difficulties and seeking appropriate solutions such as mediation or changes to hours.

If the difficulties continue, particularly if service is affected, the appropriate organisational policy such as disciplinary, managing performance, grievance or dignity at work will be followed.

Head teachers or nominated representatives (or chairs of governors) must be mindful of the potential of a harassment complaint, for example following the breakdown of a close personal relationship with another employee, and seek advice from HR Services, as appropriate. Support, guidance and counselling services can be offered where appropriate.

The above includes relationships between team members and between a line manager and employee. In the latter case the Head teacher or nominated representative (or chair of governors) will take the action described.

POLICY REDRESS

If an employee/worker considers themselves to have been treated unfairly they should initially raise this informally with their manager. If this is not appropriate or does not result in a satisfactory outcome, an employee should raise it formally by making use of the school's Grievance Policy and a worker via the complaints procedure.

NOTES

If an employee/worker needs further assistance with this document they should contact their Head teacher or HR Services.

Action initiated under one procedure may be changed to an alternative procedure if investigation of the circumstances indicates this would be more appropriate.

In applying this procedure the organisation will pay due regard to providing reasonable adjustments under disability legislation to an employee who has a disability.

COMPLIANCE

Failure to follow this procedure may impact on good employee relations and the reputation of the organisation school and governing body as a good employer. In addition, it may result in the school and governing body breaching employment legislation, incurring financial penalties and / or damage to its reputation.

Head teachers are expected to act in accordance with the policy guidelines and failure to do so may result in the managing performance or disciplinary policy and procedure being invoked as appropriate.

Any employee found to have failed to declare their relationship at the point of application to the school or, in a timely fashion, following the start of the relationship during their employment, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Any worker found to have failed to declare their relationship to the school or, in a timely fashion, following the start of the relationship during their work, may be subject to review of the working relationship.

IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL'S PRIORITIES

The policy provides clear statements about governor, Head teacher, and employee/worker responsibilities to ensure that the conduct of all school employees

is of a high standard. This policy supports schools in delivering excellent teaching and learning and enables the governing body to effectively meet its key school priorities.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS REQUIREMENTS

Head teachers and employees will be informed about this policy it should be readily available to all employees.

REVIEW

This document will be reviewed after 4 years unless circumstances demand a review before then.

Version	Status	Date	Description of change	Reason for change	Pages affected
0.01	DRAFT	AUG 13	Adapted from source document (HC policy as at 9 Jun 13)	New School Policy	All
V1.0	FINAL	NOV 13	Published	New School Policy	All
V2.0	Final	November 2023	Review	Refresh. Added section on relationships with parents / children outside of school	All