HUGHES HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Staff, Senior Members and Student Relationships Policy

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Executive Summary

- Hughes Hall is a place of education, learning and research. As such, it depends on all members of college behaving at all times with mutual respect and fairness. Everyone at Hughes Hall is personally responsible for ensuring that their conduct upholds these principles.
- This Policy seeks to protect members of staff, senior members, and students from misconduct and allegations of actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Positive professional relationships between students and members of staff and/or students and senior members are an essential part of supporting our students' educational development and ensuring their welfare whilst at the College. However, when relationships between staff and/or senior members and students become personal in nature, they may lead to actual or perceived imbalances of power or authority, accusations of bias or exploitation, and questions about the nature of consent. This can undermine trust and confidence in the academic process, impair academic progress and negatively affect the welfare of the student.
- To provide a positive, safe and supportive learning and working environment, this Policy sets out the College's position on personal relationships between students and staff and /or students and senior members, where these are of an intimate or close personal nature.
- The Policy applies to all staff and senior members, but particular provisions are set out for those members of staff and/or senior members who have direct professional responsibilities or direct or indirect academic responsibilities in relation to a student (referred to as Relevant staff/senior members). Where postgraduate students work for the college in a professional, teaching, pastoral or supervisory capacity, this Policy applies to them in that capacity as a member of staff.
- All staff and senior members have a duty to behave appropriately towards students, to act with integrity in their work and to avoid placing themselves in positions of actual or perceived conflict.
- **Relevant staff/senior members** are **prohibited** from pursuing or entering into an **intimate relationship** with any student for whom they have direct professional responsibilities or any direct or indirect academic responsibilities. Failure to comply with this Policy will be considered as a disciplinary matter.
- **Relevant staff/senior members** are **strongly discouraged** from entering into **a close personal relationship** with any such student for whom they have direct professional responsibilities or any direct or indirect academic responsibilities. When such relationships do occur, **they must be declared** so that an assessment can be made of any potential conflict of interest and influence. Failure to comply with this Policy will be considered as a disciplinary matter.
- Given the close relationship the college has with the University and the considerable overlap of personnel across institutions, this Policy closely aligns with the University's equivalent policy. This alignment aims to minimise the possibility of confusion for staff and senior members who are required to navigate and comply with both institutions' Policies.
- This policy is not contractual and may be amended from time to time, in light of changes in legislation or operational requirements.

1. Policy Purpose

1.1 This Policy seeks to protect members of staff, senior members, and students from misconduct and allegations of actual or perceived conflicts of interest by providing a framework of guidance and regulations and by ensuring appropriate safeguards and processes are in place to prevent abuses of power and sexual misconduct.

1.2 In particular, the Policy aims to prevent **intentional or unintentional conflicts of interest or abuses of power** that may occur within seemingly consensual relationships between students and Relevant staff/senior members. Students could potentially experience the negative effects of an inherent power imbalance, even where a Relevant staff/senior member does not seek to abuse their power. For example, a student may feel pressured to commence an intimate relationship with a Relevant staff/senior member, take such a relationship further than they might otherwise wish or not feel able to end such a relationship, on the basis that to do so may result in detriment.

2. Scope

2.1 This Policy applies to **all members of College staff and senior members** as defined in Section 3.

2.2 Particular provisions are set out for those members of staff/senior members who have direct professional responsibilities or direct or indirect academic responsibilities in relation to a student (referred to as Relevant staff/senior members).

2.3 This Policy does not apply to students - except where a student also has a parallel role as a member of staff. Students' attention, however, is drawn to the Policy and the terms and requirements placed on members of staff and senior members as defined below.

2.4 This Policy does **not** apply to relationships between staff and/or senior members.

3. Definitions

Abuse of power	Where a position of power or authority is used in an unacceptable manner. This can take various forms and may include, but is not limited to, grooming, manipulation, coercion and pressurising others to engagein conduct they do not feel comfortable with.
Adult at risk	Someone aged 18 years or over who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
Close personal relationship	Excludes intimate relationships, but means a relationship where the nature, content, involvement and/or frequency of interactions and/or communications between a staff/senior member and a student transgress the boundaries of professional conduct or may be reasonably perceived to do so.

Grooming	When a person builds a relationship with a child, young person or an adult who is at risk so they can abuse them and manipulate them into doing things. The abuse is usually sexual or financial, but it can also include other illegal acts.
College	Hughes Hall in the University of Cambridge.
Intimate relationship	A consensual relationship characterised by emotional, physical, and/or sexual intimacy, which may be conducted in person and/or online and/or via electronic or any other form of communication. This includes brief relationships and one-off occurrences, through to marriage or life partnerships, regardless of gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.
Staff member	Any person working within the college under a formal contract of employment or as a casual worker or any person to whom the college offers any of the privileges or facilities normally available to its employees or any individual working within the college under a contract for services and/or in a self-employed capacity. Where postgraduate students work for the college in a teaching, pastoral or supervisory capacity, this Policy applies to them in that capacity as a member of staff.
Senior member	Includes all categories of Fellow and By-Fellow.
Relevant staff/senior member	A member of staff and/or senior member who has direct professional responsibilities or direct or indirect academic responsibilities in relation to a student.
Responsibility for a student	Defined widely and includes any professional, teaching, pastoral or administrative responsibility or authority over a student, whether temporary or permanent, whether formally conferred on or voluntarily assumed by the staff/senior member and whether the responsibility arises in a college or University context. This includes but is not limited to Porters, front-of-house roles, members of the college welfare team, those in teaching positions (including supervisors), or overseeing projects or fieldwork, or involved in setting and/or marking of examinations or other assessments of any type. It also includes acting as a mentor.
Sexual Misconduct	For the purposes of this Policy, defined as any unwanted or attempted unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and includes but is not limited to: (i) sexual harassment as defined by section 26(2) of the Equality Act 2010; (ii) assault as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003; rape as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Student	Any person currently studying for an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification at Hughes Hall, or on any course arranged by or through the collegiate University, including exchange students, applicants, and offer-holders, which includes or may lead to membership of Hughes Hall. It covers all students who are registered with the college even if their status is suspended but does not include former students who have finished their courses, unless they are current applicants or offer holders with the college for another University course.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 All members of staff and senior members (as defined in Section 3) must act in compliance with this Policy.

4.2 The HR department is responsible for providing advice and support to staff members in accordance with this Policy. The Vice President is responsible for providing advice and support to senior members in accordance with this policy.

4.3 All roles involved in providing direct guidance and support to members of staff, senior members, and students are responsible for ensuring that information is handled confidentially and in accordance with section 5.8.

4.4 The President and Bursar are responsible for ensuring that members of staff and senior members within the College, plus any external members of the college's committees, are made aware of this Policy;

4.5 The Senior Tutor is responsible for receiving declarations, ensuring that up-to-date records and conflicts of interest are maintained; and for determining and recording how each has been managed.

4.6 College Council will review the policy regularly and annually review disclosures made under the Policy within the college and any resulting protective actions and measures taken.

5. Policy Statement

5.1 Terms and Disclosure (See also Appendix 2)

5.1.1 With effect from the Policy effective date:

(i) Relevant staff/senior members are prohibited from pursuing or entering into an intimate relationship with any student for whom they have direct professional responsibilities or any direct or indirect academic responsibilities. Failure to comply with this Policy will be considered as a disciplinary matter.

(ii) Relevant staff/senior members are strongly discouraged from entering into a close personal relationship with any such student for whom they have direct professional responsibilities or any direct or indirect academic responsibilities. When such relationships do occur, they must be declared so that an assessment can be made of any potential conflict of interest and influence. Failure to comply with this Policy will be considered as a disciplinary matter.

5.1.2 With effect from the Policy effective date Relevant staff/senior members must not take on or assume a professional responsibility for a student:

(i) with whom they are in an existing intimate relationship or with whom they previously had such a relationship; or

(ii) with whom they are in any close personal relationship or with whom they previously had such a relationship without first declaring this to the Senior Tutor, to enable them to assess the risk of conflicts of interest and put appropriate measures in place as necessary.

5.1.3 If at the Policy effective date, a Relevant staff/senior member:

(i) is already in an intimate or any close personal relationship with any student;

(ii) or has previously been in an intimate or any close personal relationship with any student: they should declare that relationship to the Senior Tutor within one month immediately following the Policy effective date, even if the Relevant responsibility for the student has ended.

5.1.4 If a member of staff or senior member is in an intimate or any close personal relationship with a student for whom they do not currently have any direct professional responsibilities or any direct or indirect academic responsibilities but where it would be reasonable to assume that the member of staff or senior member may in the future have responsibility for the student; the relationship should be disclosed to the Senior Tutor to assess the risk of any conflict of interest arising and put appropriate alternative and/or protective measures in place as necessary.

5.1.5 If it is found this Policy is breached unintentionally, for example where a member of staff or senior member is unaware that the other party is a student, and had no reasonable basis to suspect it, the member of staff or senior member should inform the Senior Tutor as soon as they become aware of the situation. If a member of staff or senior member is unsure whether a relationship with a student should be disclosed under this Policy, the member of staff or senior member should disclose it.

5.1.6 A declaration of any close personal relationship should be made using the Staff Declaration form in Appendix 1.

5.1.7 Relationships that are coercive, exploitative or sexualised are always unacceptable and must not occur.

5.1.8 Where an intimate or close personal relationship exists when a member of staff or senior member is appointed or when a student enrols at the College and the member of staff and/or senior member would ordinarily be a Relevant staff/senior member to a student, it is the responsibility of the member of staff and/or senior member to inform the Senior Tutor.

5.2 Close Personal Relationships

5.2.1 The College does not seek to discourage positive relationships between staff/senior members and students, and it may be appropriate for staff/senior members, and students for whom they have responsibility to jointly participate in informal, social or leisure activities, providing careful consideration is given to potential conflicts, professional norms and boundaries and to how any such behaviour might be perceived.

5.2.2 Staff/senior members must be mindful of professional boundaries in all relationships with students and must act in a way which safeguards student welfare and ensures standards of academic integrity are upheld. Even where a staff/senior member does not have and is not likely to have responsibility for a student, staff/senior members should be very aware of and

consider the potential for an actual or perceived imbalance of power or authority, accusations of bias or exploitation, and questions about the nature of consent, before embarking on an intimate or close personal relationship with a student. The risks of such are likely to be heightened where there is a significant age difference between the staff/senior member and the student; the student is an undergraduate; and/or the student is more vulnerable for any reason.

5.2.3 It is impossible to cover every potential situation which might involve, or be perceived to involve, transgression of the boundaries of professional conduct but any relationship which involves (or is perceived to involve) any of the following characteristics will be considered to do so and must be declared:

(i) any form of dependence, whether emotional, practical, financial or otherwise, and whether the student appears dependent on the member of staff or senior member; or

(ii) favouritism towards any student (which might include, for example, circumstances where a student is treated in a way that is exclusive or exceptional).

5.2.4 If there is any uncertainty, the best course is to declare a relationship, or any interaction with a student that is of concern, so that appropriate measures (to protect both the student and the member of staff or senior member) can be considered.

5.3 Relationships with students under the age of 18 or Adults at Risk

5.3.1 Staff/senior members must never enter into an intimate relationship with a student or any other person under eighteen years of age or with a student who is an adult at risk, irrespective of whether the staff/senior member has any responsibility for the student or other person.

5.3.2 Staff and senior members are reminded that intimate relationships involving students (including applicants or offer-holders) under the age of eighteen where the staff/senior member is in a position of trust or where the student is an adult at risk could fall within the scope of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

5.3.3 Anyone suspecting a member of staff or senior member of acting inappropriately towards a student or any other person under the age of 18 or an adult at risk should refer to the college's Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Policy and contact the Head of Welfare and Wellbeing as the college's designated Safeguarding Officer, who may contact the local authority designated officer and/or the Police.

5.4 Relationships and the University

5.4.1 If a college relevant staff member is also undertaking duties for the University they will be subject to University policies, additionally to or alternatively to this policy, depending on whether the professional connection arises in a University or college context, or both.

5.4.2 The Policy applies to Relevant staff members of the college even where the responsibility for the student arose, arises or will arise solely in a University context; such as where the member of staff has a separate University contract of employment or other form of engagement.

5.4.3 Where a person is both a college staff member and a Relevant staff member of the University, irrespective of any action the University may take, the college reserves the right to take action and/or put measures in place under this policy and the college contract of employment.

5.4.4 Where matters relating to this Policy cause any formal action to be taken by the college which may result in restrictions of the activities of the Relevant staff member, details of those actions

and/or restrictions will be reported to University in the interests of safeguarding student welfare and ensuring high standards of integrity and professional behaviour across the collegiate university. For further information on confidentiality, please see Section 5.9 below.

5.4.5 Where a college Relevant staff member declares a close personal relationship, the member of staff should also share that same information with the University. In those circumstances, should the University contact the college for further information, the college will provide this on a need-to-know and confidential basis.

5.5 Admissions and Recruitment

5.5.1 If an intimate or close personal relationship is pre-existing between any member of staff or senior member who has a role in selection of candidates for admission to the University and a candidate seeking admission, that member of staff or senior member must inform the Deputy Senior Tutor (Admissions) at the outset of the admissions exercise so steps can be taken to avoid any conflict of interest. The matter will, as far as possible, be handled in a way that respects confidentiality to ensure there is no detriment to the candidate.

5.6 Advice to Students

5.6.1 Students should be aware of the Policy and the terms and requirements placed on staff /senior members. Rules of Behaviour for registered students are set out in the Student Disciplinary Policy.

5.6.2 If an intimate or close personal relationship has developed contrary to this Policy, even if it predates the Policy commencement date, and/or the student is not sure that the staff/senior member has disclosed it, they are encouraged to advise the Senior Tutor or any other senior member of the College whom they feel able to approach. However, there will be no disciplinary consequences for the student if they do not do so.

5.6.3 The staff/senior member to whom the disclosure was made will be responsible for reporting the matter to the Senior Tutor to ensure that an appropriate risk assessment and resulting action is taken.

5.6.4 Students should particularly note the guidance and support available in any cases of non-consensual behaviour at section 5.6, and further sources of support at 5.7. Regardless of whether a relationship has been disclosed, students are encouraged to seek support if they experience any inappropriate behaviour from a staff/senior member during that relationship.

5.6.5 Student behaviour/s towards staff/senior members that could be interpreted as flirtatious or making advances towards a personal - particularly intimate - relationship should, except for trivial cases, be reported by the member of staff or senior member to the Senior Tutor. In this event, following consideration and if appropriate, discussion with the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, a record will be kept and measures may be put in place to separate and protect the parties or minimise the possibility of conflicts of interest, concerns or complaints over academic integrity or professional behaviour.

5.6.6 Inappropriate behaviour by a student towards a member of staff, senior member, or another student that amounts to sexual misconduct, physical misconduct or abusive behaviour, or otherwise breaches the University's Rules of Behaviour, may lead to action being taken under the Student Disciplinary Policy.

5.6.7 Students engaged in an arrangement in an external organisation must adhere to policies on personal relationships between members of staff, senior members, and students within that

organisation. However, if no Policy exists, the clauses in this section will apply.

5.7 Non-Consensual Behaviour

5.7.1 If a student experiences inappropriate behaviour in breach of this Policy, is involved in a relationship with a staff or senior member that they do not consider to be consensual, or if they consider that they have been adversely affected by a misuse of power, authority, or conflict of interest, they should make a report to the Senior Tutor or raise a complaint through the Student Grievance Policy.

5.7.2 Support and advice for students can be accessed from the College Harassment Support Tutors and/or college welfare team, the University Harassment and Violence Support Service (HVSS), or the University Counselling Service. Students can also access external advice through the Student Advice Service or University Student Support and are encouraged to access the support information on the Breaking the Silence website.

5.7.3 Staff or senior members who experience inappropriate behaviour from and/or have a complaint against a student should contact the Senior Tutor, who will consider and advise on the necessary appropriate steps.

5.7.4 Support and advice for members of staff (complainants or respondents) can also be sought from the college HR department, or the Vice President for Senior Members. Staff and senior members are also encouraged to access the support information on the University Breaking the Silence website.

5.7.5 Measures may be put in place to separate and protect the affected parties or minimise the possibility of inappropriate behaviour or complaints, and, in serious cases action may be taken under the relevant procedures.

5.8 Further Support

5.8.1 The College is committed to ensuring the welfare of and providing support for its staff, senior members, and students and the following support resources are available.

5.8.2 Help for any member of staff, senior member, or student who has been subjected to sexual misconduct, including sexual assault or rape, is available through the University's Breaking the Silence website. This includes details of services provided by both the University and external specialist organisations.

5.8.3 Information about sources of staff support is available on the University wellbeing pages and includes the University Staff Counselling Service, Occupational Health Service as well as support for those who have experienced sexual assault and emergency support for staff in distress. Members of staff can also access support from their line manager or the HR department.

5.8.4 Talking confidentially to a member of one of the University's Diversity Networks may also be helpful, particularly if the inappropriate behaviour is perceived to be harassment or discrimination due to a protected characteristic.

5.8.5 Support for students is detailed on the College's Student Centre pages. Help can also be sought from the University's Student Support Department including the Harassment and Violence Support Service (HVSS) and Counselling Service. The Office of Student Conduct Complaints and Appeals can also provide advice about pursuing a complaint.

5.9 Confidentiality

5.9.1 Concerns raised under this Policy should be treated in confidence as far as that is reasonably possible and consistent with safeguarding the welfare of students.

5.9.2 Information about an intimate or close personal relationship between a member of staff and/or senior member and a student may be placed on the member of staff or senior member's personnel file. Communications regarding measures put in place as a result of this Policy should, as far as possible, be neutral, limited to essential facts, and without details published of the situation that gave rise to them. Records will be treated as confidential and be kept no longer than necessary in accordance with Relevant data protection principles.

5.9.3 There may be circumstances where it will be necessary for the Senior Tutor to notify a member of staff's or senior member's University department or institution or College (where there is an affiliation with another College). Consideration will be given to whether there is a potential risk to the student and/or other students arising from the nature of the allegations against the member of staff or senior member, the welfare of the student and the need to ensure that high standards of academic integrity and professional behaviour are maintained, while taking account of the data protection/privacy rights of the member of staff and/or senior member.

5.9.4 The Senior Tutor should consider whether it is appropriate to notify the student's Faculty/department where an intimate or close personal relationship is made known. In most cases this should only be done with the student's consent, unless there is a serious and compelling welfare concern or risk affecting the student and/or other students.

5.10 Malicious or vexatious complaints

5.10.1 A malicious complaint is one that is made with the intention to intimidate, to lower the reputation of, or otherwise injure or harm a person, through knowingly providing false or misleading information or withholding information about an incident or issue.

5.10.2 A vexatious complaint is either one that is made with the sole or main intention to harass, annoy or subdue somebody, or one that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, deliberately burdensome or unwarranted.

5.10.3 If it is found that a person has made a complaint that is malicious or vexatious, the College may instigate a disciplinary process against them. Disciplinary action will not be taken, however, if the matter is mistaken or otherwise ill- founded but not malicious or vexatious.

5.11 Failure to comply with this Policy

5.11.1 After the adoption of the Policy, Relevant staff/senior members should not pursue or commence an intimate relationship with any student for whom they have direct professional responsibilities or any direct or indirect academic responsibilities. Should this occur, this will be a breach of this policy.

5.11.2 Failure on the part of a Relevant staff/senior member to declare an intimate or close personal relationship with a student will be a breach of this policy.

5.11.3 Breaches of this policy will be dealt with via the disciplinary processes set out in Appendix 3.

6. Associated Documents

6.1 A number of policies and processes may be relevant, all of which can be found on the Policies webpage:

- Grievance Procedure (Students)
- Disciplinary Policy (Students)
- Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Hughes Hall Statutes and Ordinances

6.2 The University's guidance in relation to the application of its policy is available at staff_and_students_relationship_guidance_0.pdf. It includes helpful guidance around staff responsibility for a student, guidance on boundaries between support and responsibility, and expectations around professional behaviour.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Declaration form

Appendix 2 – Terms and disclosure in diagram form

Appendix 3 – Disciplinary policies / processes applied in case of a breach of this policy.

8. Implementation / Communication / Training

Following Council approval, this policy will be added to the website and all staff and senior members will be made aware of it and any action required by the President. Students will be informed of the policy via the Senior Tutor's bulletin.

Appendix 1 – Declaration Form

SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY MEMBER OF STAFF OR SENIOR MEMBER	
Staff/Senior Member details	
Name:	
Staff/Senior Member/Both:	
Position:	
Department (if applicable):	
Line Manager name (if applicable):	
Student's details	
Name:	
CRSid:	
Course:	
Nature of Relationship	
Close personal	Y/N
Intimate	Y/N
When did the relationship start? (Approx month/year)	

I understand the following:

- It may be necessary for permanent or temporary adjustments to be made to remove any real or perceived conflict of interest arising from the relationship.
- This information will be stored securely and managed in compliance with data protection legislation.
- I have read and understood the College's Staff, Senior Member and Student Relationships Policy.

Signed:
Print Name:
Date:

Completed form to be sent to Senior Tutor who may discuss the form with the HR Department, Bursar, President, staff or senior member submitting the form and the student, as necessary.

SECTION B: TO BE COMPLETED BY SENIOR TUTOR
Has this relationship been declared within one month of policy effective date? Y/N
If no, please provide details

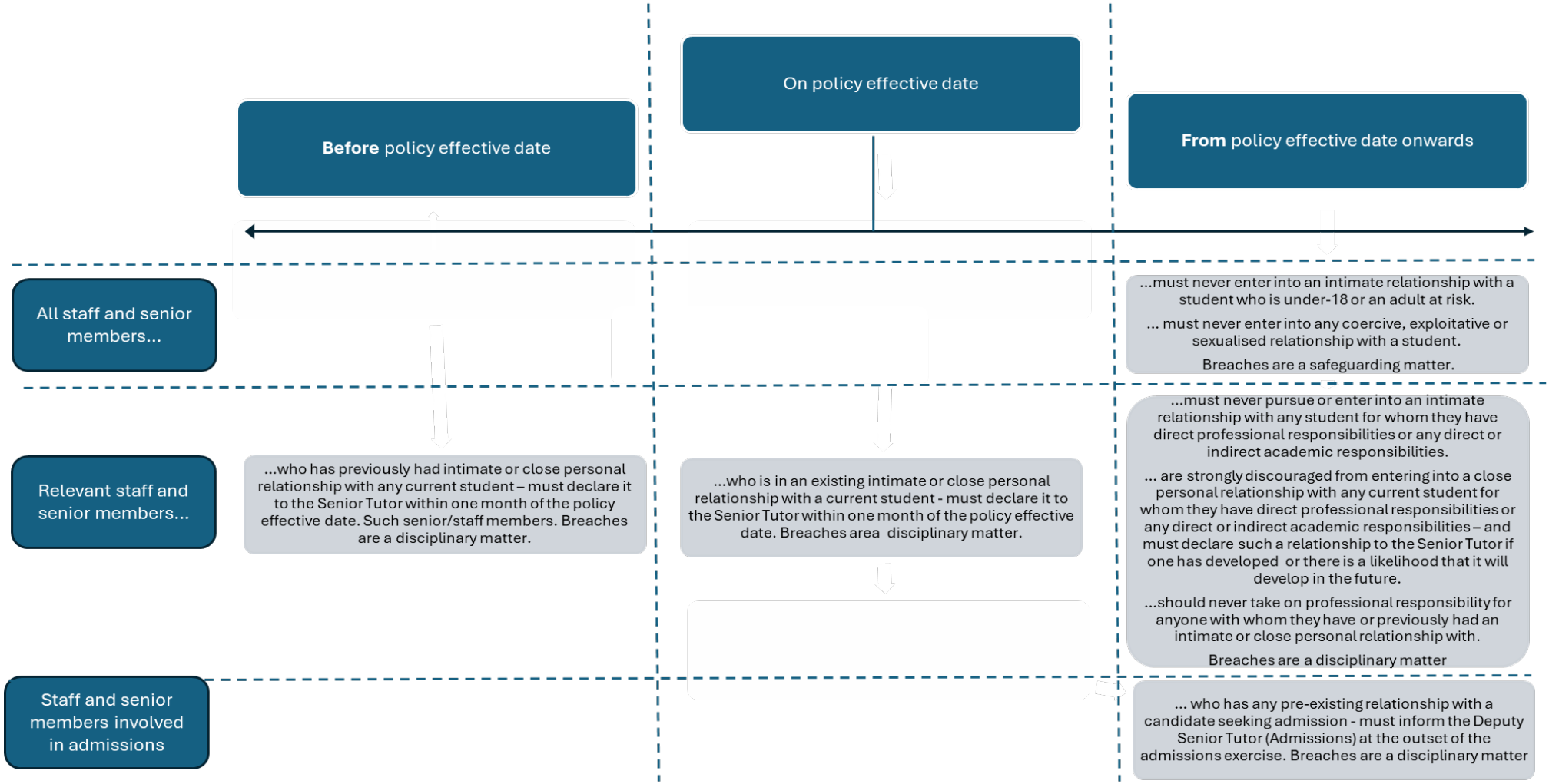
Is action required including a management plan? Y/N

Reasons for recommended plan
Details of action / plan

Senior Tutor/Bursar signature:	
Print name:	
Date:	

Senior Tutor to send a copy to member of staff/senior member.

Appendix 2 – Terms and disclosure in diagram form



Appendix 3

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the following policies/processes:

- Academic staff: Academic Staff Statute, Ordinance [C,I,31(a)] or [C,I,31(b)] and Ordinance [C,V] Postholders: Academic Staff Statute, Ordinance [C,I,32-34] and Ordinance [C,V];
- GB Fellow: Parts [I-IV] of the Academic Staff Statute and Ordinance [C,V] shall apply A Former President, Class G, or a Titular Fellow – Ordinance [C,1,34 – 35]
- Assistant staff– Staff handbook