



Personal Relationships at Work Policy

Issue No:	5
Responsible Officer:	Maryjane Elder (SPSO)
Author:	Marjane Elder
Date Last Amended:	June 2019
Next Renewal Date:	June 2023

Introduction

We recognise that employees may form friendships and sometimes personal relationships with colleagues or those connected with their work. While we do not wish to interfere with these relationships, the Ore Valley Group is duty bound to ensure that all staff behave appropriately, adhere to our standards of conduct set out in our policies and, avoid behaviours which could lead to allegations of impropriety.

This policy sets out Ore Valley Group's expected standards regarding personal relationships connected to work. We ask that you speak to your line manager if you are unsure of the standards expected of you. If the expected standards set out below are not met, we will manage any breaches following our disciplinary procedure.

This policy applies to all staff, workers and volunteers within Ore Valley Group. The policy and procedure are non-contractual. The Ore Valley Group may change it at any time as is appropriate. Should changes be made, we will communicate these to you before they take effect.

This Policy should also be cross-referenced with the following Policies and Procedures:

- Code of Conduct
- Declarations of Interest Procedures
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Equalities and Diversity Policy
- Staff Induction Policy

Definitions

● Personal Relationship

For the purposes of this policy, the term personal relationship is defined as any relationship, from friendship through to two people 'being in a relationship together.

Policy Aims:

- To be clear on our standards and expectations concerning personal relationships at work.
- To manage any situations out with the expected standards in accordance with this policy.
- To manage situations that may arise in a fair, consistent and appropriate way, and comply with all relevant discriminatory legislation.

We expect you will:

- Not allow any close personal relationships with a colleague, contractor, client, customer or supplier to influence your conduct, judgement or decisions while at work.
- Declare a close personal relationship with a colleague or any other person connected to your employment to your line manager. If the relationship is between a manager/supervisor, we expect this to be declared to a more senior manager and our Chief Executive.
- Respect your surroundings, your colleagues and our organisation.
- Not behave inappropriately during working hours, this is not acceptable, nor outwith working hours with any matters connected or associated with your employment
- Be aware of your behaviour in any social media interaction connected to personal relationships at work
- Follow the highest standards of behaviour at conferences and all other internal or external events where you are there in connection with the Ore Valley Group.

You can expect the Ore Valley Group:

- To treat any information concerning a personal relationship connected to your work in the strictest of confidence. This will also be recorded on the personal files of both employees if both of you are staff of us.
- To discuss the situation with those involved, this will be done by an appropriate senior manager. We may move one or both employees to another job in another team or, consider other working arrangements in line with the needs of the organisation. In these circumstances, the organisation will discuss options with both employees and seek to reach an agreement regarding the transfer of one or both employees.
- If appropriate measures or working arrangements cannot be put in place, the organisation may terminate the employment of one or both as a last resort.
- To apply similar principles to an employee who is in a close personal relationship with a client, customer, contractor or supplier, in particular where the employee's job has the authority or a close connection with the individual. We expect the relationship to be declared to the employee's line manager. In these circumstances, The Ore Valley Group may move the employee to another job in another team or, consider other working arrangements in line with the needs of the organisation or, as a last resort may terminate the contract of employment with the employee.
- In situations where a close personal relationship with a Governing Body Member or, another volunteer, a client, customer, contractor or supplier, the Governing Body Member/volunteer will be excluded from any discussions connected to the person they have a personal relationship with. If this is not

possible or appropriate, the Governing Body member may be required to step down from their position.

Termination

If termination of employment is the last and final consideration available after other avenues have been explored, the following fair process will be followed:

- The employee will be invited by the employer to put forward suggestions for a suitable alternative working arrangement that meets the needs of our business.
- The Senior Officer will take all suggestions and consider them.
- The Senior Officer will produce a comprehensive and succinct report outlining the business reasons why it is not appropriate to continue with the employment relationship.
- The employee will be invited to a formal meeting in writing. Along with the letter, the employee will also receive the senior officer's report and any other information the panel will have available to them.
- At the meeting, they will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague, and both parties (the employer and employee) will be given the opportunity to put forward their case.
- The meeting will be conducted by those with authority to dismiss.
- The panel will deliberate (in private) over the information put before them before making a decision.
- The decision of the panel will be communicated in writing to the employee within **10 working days** of the decision being made; this letter will also provide details of how to appeal.
- The employee will be paid all accrued annual leave, TOIL and flexi not yet taken to the date of termination. As well as any payment in lieu of notice as set out in their contract of employment if a decision to dismiss is made.

This policy has been implemented as a result of discussions between our Board, staff and managers. This policy will be monitored and reviewed as appropriate.

