

# Staff & Student Relationships Policy



## Policy

The Emil Dale Academy (EDA)\*\*\*\* is in a unique position whereby students whilst in training may have the opportunity to work as part of the Imagination Team at the Emil Dale Weekend Schools, known as EDSA, or the Cambridge branch, known as EDSA Cambridge, or as part of The Factory Playhouse Front of House team.

There is, naturally, a cross over between staff employed in the private sector hours of EDA, EDSA and EDSA Cambridge. As a result, students may find themselves working in close proximity to faculty members.

This policy aims to position the parameters for appropriate relationships between staff and students, both in an educational and work environment, in order to effectively protect staff and students alike. It seeks to protect students and staff from allegations of actual or perceived conflicts of interest, and to limit circumstances where a position of power may be abused. Any relationship should be one that is created with respect, trust and assurance.

*\*\*\*In this policy, the abbreviation of EDA will be used but covers all business streams of the Emil Dale Academy.*

## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a **professional** relationship is defined as:

- A supervisor, mentor, tutor, assessor or teacher; or
- A pastoral role; or
- An administrative role; or
- Technical support; or
- SpLD Support role.

For the purpose of this policy, a **personal** relationship is defined as:

- A family relationship; or
- A business/commercial/financial relationship;
- A romantic relationship.

For the purpose of this policy, “staff” includes any person who is employed by EDA. This policy will also apply to any graduate students working for EDA in a teaching or related capacity.

## Relationships between staff and students

EDA recognises that, in order to push and develop students, an appropriate, supportive professional relationship between a student and staff member is a key tool. To truly benefit from their time and the training at EDA, students must trust staff members, and feel comfortable and confident. EDA believes that every student should experience equality of treatment, and that no student should feel prejudice of treatment during their study.

With that being said, boundaries must be set between staff members and students, and must be respected by faculty members, whether full-time, part-time, or those under contracted hours. A personal relationship of an intimate nature between a staff member or student can be perceived to create a risk of favouritism or abuse of

authority. It can also undermine the relationship of trust and confidence which is intrinsic to staff and student interactions during training.

All employees of the EDA faculty are in a position of trust. Staff members are under a duty to act with integrity and not place themselves in a position of actual or apparent conflict. Under no circumstances should a staff member arrange a meeting with a student socially outside of EDA, unless it is within a professional capacity to attend an official EDA event, for example a concert or performance.

It is also considered inappropriate for staff members to engage in a relationship via social media, including Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Any contact outside of the EDA private sector hours should come through the appropriate measures. Where possible, via the faculty inbox.

Where students approach staff members via inappropriate means, such as social media or personal emails, the staff member should ignore the message, and report it to the office.

## Legislation

EDA's stance on appropriate staff and student relationships should be read in accordance with the following procedures and duties:

- Safeguarding;
- Health and Safety
- Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Equality and Diversity

## Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of any staff or faculty member to report any familial relationship when a student applies or enrolls at EDA. Similarly, any staff member intending to work alongside a student in a business/commercial/financial capacity should report this to EDA to ensure no conflicts of interest arise. These should be made within one calendar month. Once declared, a conflict of interest management plan will be made.

As the declaration will contain sensitive information it will be stored securely, and managed in compliance with data protection legislation. Declarations will be treated respectfully, sensitively and confidentially. This includes same-sex relationships where the parties may not be "out" publicly.

In order to maintain an appropriate and physical distance from students, to reduce the risk of misconduct, abuse of power or a conflict of interest, staff of EDA should:

- Maintain an appropriate physical and emotional distance and perform duties without favour towards individual students. EDA acknowledge that within certain disciplines physical contact may be necessary, for example demonstrating lifts in dance, but this must always be conducted in a safe and respectful manner;
- Use appropriate streams for communication avoiding personal messaging, such as Messenger, Twitter or Instagram, and refrain from contacting students outside of reasonable working hours;
- Communicate with students in a professional manner at all times;
- Give careful consideration before sharing their personal mobile. EDA acknowledge that at times this may be unavoidable, for example when a student is attending an event arranged outside of the private sector hours, such as a performance or concert;
- Adhere to the same guidelines, where logistically possible, when working with a student outside of the private sector hours, for example on the Front of House team at The Factory Playhouse.

Students selected to work for another business stream of EDA must conduct themselves in a respectful manner. They must not use their employment for EDA to enhance personal bonds with faculty members or to establish favourable treatment during their training.

Students should learn to extract hours spent in a learning environment from those in a working capacity. Where it is found a student is abusing their position of power, or using their contracted hours of work to manipulate treatment during training, EDA may have to terminate the employment.

## **Declaration of intimate or close personal relationships**

In the event that a personal relationship between a member of staff and a student arises; or there has been a personal relationship between a member of staff and a student with whom that member of staff is due to have a professional connection, the member of staff in question must disclose this to their Head of Department. If the staff member is unsure whether or not a relationship with a student should be disclosed under this policy, the member of staff should disclose it.

Where a student or staff member believes individuals are entering into a personal relationship they should report this to a member of the Senior Faculty. All claims will be taken seriously and treated with confidentiality, where appropriate.

Staff will be informed in writing, within 7 working days of the report, issuing clear guidance on the disciplinary procedure and action that will be taken.

Regarding Issues that fall outside of the private sector hours, for example hours issued by the Knights Templar, Baldock, awarding bodies may have their own procedures that take precedence over EDA's policy in serious circumstances.

## **Breach of policy**

Any employee thought to be in breach of this policy will be investigated. Should it be deemed necessary, appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken.

Failure to disclose a close personal relationship with a student where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest, breach of trust or confidentiality, may be investigated under the disciplinary procedure.

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01	25.11.2020	25.11.2021	Sarah Hooper	First draft