



Staff & Student Relationships Policy

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1. Policy

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.*

2. Definitions

4. For the purpose of this policy, a **professional** relationship is defined as:
 - a. A supervisor, mentor, tutor, assessor or teacher; or
 - b. A pastoral role; or
 - c. An administrative role; or
 - d. Technical support; or
 - e. SpLD Support role.
5. For the purpose of this policy, a **personal** relationship is defined as:
 - a. A family relationship; or
 - b. A business/commercial/financial relationship;
 - c. A romantic relationship;
 - d. A friendship (including the giving and/or receiving of telephone numbers, personal email addresses, social media handles etc).
6. 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.

3. Relationships between staff and students

7. Emil Dale Academy (EDA) recognises that professional, supportive relationships between staff and students are vital to achieving high standards of training and learning. These relationships must always be founded on mutual trust, respect, and professional integrity.
8. EDA has a **zero-tolerance policy** for any romantic, sexual, or otherwise intimate relationship between a member of staff and a student **for the duration of the student’s enrolment** at EDA. This prohibition exists to protect both students and staff from:
 - a. Actual or perceived abuse of power,
 - b. Conflicts of interest or unfair advantage, and
 - c. Damage to trust and confidence within the educational environment.
9. All EDA staff occupy positions of authority and trust, and are therefore expected to act with integrity and avoid situations that could create an actual or apparent conflict of interest.
10. Staff must **not**:
 - a. Form, pursue, or engage in a romantic or intimate relationship with any current student.
 - b. Meet socially with a student outside of professional or EDA-sanctioned events (e.g., public performances, concerts).
 - c. Communicate with students via personal social media, messaging platforms, or personal email addresses.
 - d. Share personal contact information (such as mobile numbers or private email addresses) with students.
11. All professional communication should occur via EDA-approved channels (e.g., Teams, EDA email accounts, or office phone number 01462 677808).

12. Where students attempt to contact staff through inappropriate channels (e.g., personal social media or personal email), staff must not respond and must report the contact to their line manager or the EDA office.

4. Legislation

13. EDA's stance on appropriate staff and student relationships should be read in accordance with the following procedures and duties:
 - a. Safeguarding
 - b. Health and Safety
 - c. Staff Disciplinary Procedures
 - d. Staff Code of Conduct
 - e. Equality and Diversity

5. Responsibilities

14. It is the responsibility of any staff or faculty member to report any familial relationship when a student applies or enrolls at EDA.
15. 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.
16. These should be made within one calendar month. Once declared, a conflict-of-interest management plan will be made.
17. 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:
 - a. 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.
 - b. Use appropriate streams for communication avoiding personal messaging on any social media platforms, such as Messenger, Twitter, TikTok, Snapchat or Instagram, and refrain from contacting students outside of reasonable working hours;
 - c. Communicate with students in a professional manner at all times, using language that does not include the use of swearing, sexualisation, racial and cultural appropriation, ethnocentrism, political partisanship, religion-based discrimination, ableism and/or sexism.
 - d. Communication with students outside of face-to-face conversations should take place within Teams, EDA staff and student emails, or by calling the office number 01462 677808. If the staff member does not have an EDA staff email/ Teams account, they should ask their relevant line manager to communicate via the above means.
 - e. Do not share any personal contact address, such as mobile phone numbers or email addresses. Only EDA staff email addresses should be shared.
 - f. Adhere to the same guidelines when working with a student outside of the private sector hours, for example on the Front of House team at The Factory Playhouse.
18. 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.
19. Students should learn to extract hours spent in a learning environment from those in a working capacity.
20. Where it is found a staff member 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.

6. Declaration of personal relationships

21. If a member of staff has, or has previously had, a close personal relationship with a student (including family, financial, or other personal connections), this must be **declared immediately** to the Head of Department.
22. Where a personal relationship exists or develops, the Head of Department will initiate a Conflict of Interest Management Plan to ensure transparency and prevent unfair treatment or perception of bias.
23. EDA strictly prohibits romantic or intimate relationships between staff and students during the student's enrolment. If any staff member becomes aware or suspects that such a relationship exists or is developing, they must report it immediately to a member of the Senior Faculty.
24. All reports will be handled sensitively and confidentially, with investigations managed under the *EDA Staff Disciplinary Procedure*. Outcomes may include formal disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
25. In circumstances where a staff member enters a relationship with a former student within six months of graduation or withdrawal, both parties must declare this to EDA. This period provides an ethical buffer to prevent any perception that the relationship began under a position of power or influence.
26. Declarations will be treated respectfully, sensitively and confidentially. This includes same-sex relationships where the parties may not be "out" publicly.
27. Where the student is enrolled on a programme validated by an external awarding body (e.g. the University of Bedfordshire or North Hertfordshire College), any applicable procedures from that body may take precedence in cases of serious misconduct.

7. When personal relationships are acceptable

28. Personal relationships between staff and students are only acceptable after the student has fully completed their course or has withdrawn from study, and only where no actual or perceived conflict of interest exists.
29. All relationships that could create a conflict of interest — including financial, familial, or close friendships — must still be declared to EDA to ensure transparency and fairness.

8. Internal work where students and teachers/ staff are working together, inside Emil Dale Academy

30. EDA is in a unique position whereby students whilst in training may have the opportunity to work as part of the Animation Team at the Emil Dale Weekend Schools, known as EDSA, or as part of The Factory Playhouse Front of House team.
31. There is, naturally, a cross over between staff employed in the private sector hours of EDA, and EDSA. As a result, students may find themselves working in close proximity to faculty members.

9. External professional work where students and teachers/ staff are working together, outside of Emil Dale Academy

32. In the event that a teacher and student work together in a professional capacity on a job that is external to Emil Dale Academy, this must be declared by both parties by the student emailing info@emildale.co.uk and the teacher discussing directly with their line manager.
33. Emil Dale Academy will not be responsible for any communication or conduct outside of their remit or premises.
34. Emil Dale Academy will not be responsible for any online, email, social media postings or groups, or phone communication between parties about the job or professional work.
35. Emil Dale Academy will not be responsible for any face-to-face time spent between the student and teacher with regards to a particular job that has been declared.

10. Receiving Gifts or Hospitality Offers

36. In the event that as a member of staff you are given a gift or offer of hospitality as a Thank you from a student or parent, It is vital that this is not seen as a conflict of interest, connected to a favour or preferential treatment and is not seen to impact the equality of treatment of all students at EDA.
37. In exercising judgement as to whether to accept a gift or hospitality the question should be asked what public perception would be if the information was published given your role and responsibilities.
38. Staff may retain all gifts valued at £40.00 or under, if given in recognition of your professional duties.
39. For gifts exceeding a value of £40.00 the following options are suggested:
- Share the gift with all staff;
 - Raffle the gift for charity;
 - donate the gift to charity; or
 - make a donation to charity and keep the gift
40. It is your responsibility to declare all gifts to your Line Manager if you believe there to be a conflict of interest.

11. Breach of policy

41. Any employee thought to be in breach of this policy will be investigated. Should it be deemed necessary, appropriatedisciplinary measures will be taken.
42. 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.
43. Any failure to disclose a personal relationship or to comply with this policy may be treated as gross misconduct and investigated under the *EDA Staff Disciplinary Procedure*.
44. EDA reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any employee found to have engaged in an intimate or romantic relationship with a current student, or who fails to report a conflict of interest.

12. Document Control

Version Number	Date of Issue	Review Date	Author	Changes Made/ detail
01	25.11.2020	25.11.2021	Sarah Hooper	First issue
02	14.06.2021	July 2021	Sarah Moore	Adding section "External professional work where students and teachers/ staff are working together, outside of Emil Dale Academy"
03	26.07.2021	July 2022	Eden Tinsey and Charlotte Oliver	Adding section "Receiving Gifts or Hospitality Offers" Inclusion of University of Bedfordshire as a named awarding body in "Declaration of intimate or close personal relationships"

04	15.02.2022	February 2023	Eden Tinsey	Creation of “Internal work where students and teachers/ staff are working together, inside Emil Dale Academy” Addition of TikTok to social media platforms Emphasis that Romantic personal relationships are against EDA and EDSA policy Addition made to “Declaration of personal relationships”
05	29th July 2022	July 2023	Eden Tinsey	Annual policy review
06	10 th May 2023	July 2024	Eden Tinsey	Addition of ‘When personal relationships are acceptable’
07	22 nd October 2025	September 2026	Sarah Moore	Updated format

