



**PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
(WITHIN THE ALRA COMMUNITY)
POLICY**



Personal Relationships (within the ALRA Community) Policy

Positioning Statement:

There is potential for abuse or the perception of abuse in any relationships between individuals in inherently unequal positions, such as where one individual is expected to deliver teaching or have management responsibility toward the other.

Due to the potential for conflict of interest, exploitation or bias, such relationships may undermine the integrity of the supervision or evaluation provided or may have adverse effects on the working and learning environment for those directly involved, as well as for the broader team culture.

Relationships in which one party is in a position to evaluate the work or influence the outcomes for the other, may also provide grounds for complaint by third parties when that relationship gives undue access or advantage, restricts opportunities, or simply creates a perception of these problems.

This policy seeks to instruct the community of ALRA to behave in a manner where this abuse of power is negated at every level.

Definitions

Abuse of Power

Abuse of power is where someone uses their position of power or authority in an unacceptable manner. Abuse of power can take various forms and may include, but is not limited to, grooming, manipulation, coercion, putting pressure on others to engage in conduct they do not feel comfortable with.

Close Personal Relationships

A close personal relationship is a regular, ongoing relationship with a relative, close family friend, intimate partner, or one where there is financial dependence.

Intimate Relationships

An intimate relationship is a consensual romantic or sexual relationship which goes beyond the bounds of a platonic or working relationship. An intimate relationship could be brief, and includes a one-off occurrence.

Consent to an Intimate Relationship

Consent is agreeing by choice and having the freedom and capacity to make that choice. The person seeking consent should always take steps to ensure that consent is freely given, that it is informed and recognises that it can be withdrawn at any time.

Grooming

Grooming can be defined as a gradual process that someone in a position of power uses to manipulate someone to do things they may not be comfortable with and to make them less



likely to reject or report abusive behaviour. Grooming will initially start as befriending someone and making them feel special and may result in sexual abuse and/or exploitation.

Position of Trust

Any staff member working closely with children, young people, or adults at risk, is in a position of trust.

Relationships With Students, Applicants or Staff Under the Age of 18

Members of staff must not be in, or enter into, a close personal or intimate relationship with a student or staff member under the age of 18, or an adult known or suspected to be at risk.

Staff must not engage in sexual behaviour with someone with whom they are in a position of trust. Whilst a young person can consent to sexual activity once they reach the age of 16, the Sexual Offences Act (2003) makes it a criminal offence for a person to engage in sexual activity of any kind with a person under the age of 18, where the adult is in a position of trust.

Anyone suspecting a member of staff of acting inappropriately towards a student or staff member under the age of 18 or an adult at risk should refer to the Safeguarding Policy and contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who may contact the local authority designated officer and/or the police.

Relationships Between Members of Staff and Students

Staff should conduct themselves at all times in ways that are consistent with ALRA policy and procedures and acknowledge their professional and ethical responsibility to protect the interests of students and accept the obligations and constraints inherent in that responsibility, as per their duty of care.

To maintain the relationship with students based on trust, confidence and equal treatment, all staff (including all freelance tutors) must not enter into an intimate relationship with a student.

As ALRA is a small provider in which all staff will have some form of responsibility in the areas of teaching/learning, assessment, selection, pastoral care, finance or student experience, any relationship between any staff member or student is at risk of abuse of power or at risk of contravening safeguarding protocol.

Such relationships can also lead to conflicts of interest (actual or perceived), which can have a detrimental effect on the teaching and learning environment for other students and colleagues.

Should a personal relationship already exist when the member of staff or student enters ALRA, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to declare their involvement to their Line Manager and HR.

Socialising between students and staff is a difficult area to govern but is discouraged on all counts until the learner has graduated from the Academy. Should a staff member be reported



to regularly be socialising with a current student disciplinary action will be commenced and learners will also face disciplinary measures. The rationale for this is that both parties are making themselves vulnerable through this act and can face potentially unclear communication that can lead to harm on both parts.

SLC have made the decision that there is to be no social media contact between the ALRA community regarding official ALRA matters, be that events, assessment, learning or rehearsal. All communication must be kept on Teams or internal email.

When ALRA is made aware of a pre-existing student/staff relationship, it will consider the appropriate action in a manner that protects the integrity of all parties. When the allocated person or department at ALRA (as defined above) is made aware of a pre-existing student/staff relationship, the appropriate action will be considered and relayed to the parties in a manner that protects the integrity of all. Those involved will be consulted and are expected to comply with reasonable action. ALRA will ensure these matters are dealt with in confidence and as sensitively as possible.

Any undeclared relationships between staff and students will be regarded as misconduct and will be treated as a disciplinary matter and where the staff member has direct supervision of, direct responsibility for, or involvement in, that student's academic studies and/or personal welfare, it will be regarded as a matter of gross misconduct. A full investigation will be undertaken in all cases and, if upheld, will result in disciplinary action against the staff member, up to and including termination of employment.

Relationships Between Members of Staff

Where close personal relationships occur or pre-exist between staff, there is a responsibility on the staff members to inform their Line Manager(s) and to work constructively with the manager to recognise and address potential and or perceived conflicts of interest (wherever reasonably practicable). Action may include, for example, revising line management structures where a relationship develops between a line manager and someone within their team.

Staff should also declare any personal relationships (such as family or business relationships) that may have the potential to unfairly disadvantage or advantage an individual. Following this declaration revisions will be made to the job duties of each person to avoid conflict.

Professional Conduct

At all times, members of the ALRA community, staff and students, are expected to maintain boundaries between professional and personal life. Close personal relationships may have the potential to cause concern and disruption for other students and colleagues and therefore appropriate conduct is essential.

It is the responsibility of all parties in such relationships to behave discretely, in a professional and respectful manner at all times, in the course of all ALRA business, events and performing professional duties elsewhere, including in the office environment, at conferences, or on social



occasions. Some behaviour could be considered, or perceived as overstepping appropriate professional boundaries and risk prompting complaints of unacceptable behaviour or a conflict of interest even when such an outcome was not intended. Examples include:

- Overt displays of affection in work settings
- Excessive or flirtatious contact in work settings
- Inappropriate remarks, messages or jokes (either face to face, electronically or via social media where they are visible to others)

If there are concerns that the relationship is non-consensual at any point, from the beginning of the relationship or later on, e.g. that the dynamic in the relationship changes or one party maintains unnecessary and unwelcome contact after a relationship has ended, the individual is encouraged to discuss this with the Safeguarding Officer or HR.