

Hugh Baird College

Staff Student Relationships Policy

Effective Date:	September 2025
Version Number:	1
Author:	Deputy HR Director
Review Date:	June 2026
Approved by:	P&P
Disseminated by:	HBC Website

Note: To be read in conjunction with:

- Student Anti-Harassment, Bullying and Hate Crime Policy
- Prevention of Bullying Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure
- Complaint Policy and Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Social Media Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy

Table of Contents

Purpose and scope	3
Principles	3
Definitions	3
Policy statement	4
Responsibilities	4
Reporting and Support	5
Sanctions	5

1. Purpose and Scope:

This policy sets out Hugh Baird College's approach to relationships between staff and students. It is intended to safeguard the wellbeing of students, uphold the integrity of academic and professional standards, and ensure compliance with the Office for Students (OfS) Condition E6.

It applies to **all** Hugh Baird College staff and **all** students enrolled at the College.

2. Principles:

- **Professional Boundaries:** Staff are expected to maintain professional relationships with students at all times.
- **Safeguarding and Duty of Care:** Staff–student relationships must not compromise student welfare or create risks of harassment, sexual misconduct, exploitation, or conflicts of interest.
- **Fairness and Equity:** Relationships must not undermine trust, fairness, or the integrity of academic decision-making.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Where personal relationships exist, they must be declared to ensure appropriate management of potential conflicts of interest.

3. Definitions

- **Personal Relationship:** Any relationship beyond a strictly professional or academic interaction, including but not limited to close friendships, financial relationships, familial relationships, and sexual or romantic relationships.
- An **"Intimate Personal Relationship"** means a relationship that involves one or more of the following elements:
 - i. physical intimacy including isolated or repeated sexual activity; or
 - ii. romantic or emotional intimacy.
- **"Excluded Relationships"** means any ongoing Intimate Personal Relationship that:

- i. existed before the date the Office for Students Condition E6 came into force and that remains in existence; or
 - ii. existed before the date that the Staff member became a Relevant Staff Member in relation to that Student.
- **Conflict of Interest:** A situation where personal interests could improperly influence (or be perceived to influence) a staff member's professional judgement.

4. Policy statement

4.1 Prohibited Relationships

- Staff must not enter into sexual or romantic relationships with students where they have, or are likely to have, academic, pastoral, or professional responsibility for assessment, supervision, or support.
- Staff must not exploit positions of trust for personal gain.

4.2 Declaration of Pre-Existing or Developing Relationships

- Any personal relationship between a member of staff and a student must be declared in writing at the earliest opportunity to the **Deputy HR Director**, whether they be intimate or excluded.
- Thereafter, consideration may be given to put appropriate measures in place, which may include:
 - Reallocation of teaching/supervision/assessment duties.
 - Removal of the staff member from decision-making processes affecting the student.
 - Ongoing monitoring to avoid perceptions of favouritism or bias.

4.3 Safeguards Against Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

- The College has zero tolerance for harassment, sexual misconduct, coercion, or abuse of power in staff–student interactions.
- Allegations will be investigated under the College's Prevention of Bullying Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy.

5. Responsibilities

- **Staff:** Maintain professional boundaries, declare conflicts, and avoid any conduct that could constitute harassment, misconduct, or exploitation.
- **Managers:** Ensure declarations are managed appropriately and conflicts of interest are mitigated.
- **Students:** Encouraged to report concerns, assured of non-retaliation, and supported by dedicated safeguarding, wellbeing, and complaints procedures.

6. Reporting and support

Concerns about staff–student relationships should be raised immediately and reported to the Deputy HR Director and the College’s Student Services Manager. This can be raised by submitting a Staff Concern report on Atlas.

Concerns may include but are not limited to:

- Power Imbalance and Exploitation
- Conflicts of Interest
- Consent and Vulnerability
- Unethical or unprofessional conduct
- Post-Relationship Issues

Support services, including wellbeing, counselling, safeguarding officers, and independent advocacy, are available to students and staff.

7. Sanctions

Any breach or violation of this policy shall be considered as misconduct and may result in disciplinary action in line with the College’s Staff Disciplinary Policy and Employee code of Conduct, up to and including dismissal.

