

## Relationships and Professional Boundaries

The purpose of this document is to offer clear guidelines in relation to our safeguarding policy for teachers and members of staff around the areas of student/teacher relationships. This policy exists to offer guidance on the areas where **Professional and Personal relationships** may overlap, and to ensure that members of staff do not commit acts of:

- Impropriety
- Bias
- Abuse of power
- Conflicts of Interest
- Gross Misconduct

### Examples of favourable or less favourable treatment that may be as a result of abuse of power:

- Not receiving a positive review or reference or receiving a negative review or reference.
- Unfavourable treatment in academic assessments, for example, less access to support or feedback, less opportunity for extensions, lower grades or marks.
- Restricting access to resources.
- Restricting participation in aspects of a student's training.
- Receiving a positive review or reference.
- Favourable treatment on academic assessments, for example greater access to support or feedback, more opportunity for extensions, higher grades or marks.
- Being promised introductions to others who could advance their academic or professional career.
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For this policy:

A **Personal Relationship** is defined as:

- A family relationship
- A business/commercial/financial relationship
- A close personal friend
- A sexual/romantic relationship

A **Professional Relationship** is defined as:

- Where there is an assessing, supervising, tutoring, teaching or pastoral responsibility.
- A role which provides administrative or technical support.

*Anything which is not covered by our definitions (such as the hiring of students professionally outside of National Centre for Circus Arts) will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead for review before the relationship commences.*

## Prejudice

To ensure fairness in the treatment of students, it is important to ensure that there is no feeling of prejudice being perceived by others where a **Personal Relationship** is established between a member of staff and a student.

## Hard Line

We recognise that, due to the nature of the training, genuine relationships do occur between students and staff at many levels. However, while working with the National Centre for Circus Arts **no intimate, sexual, or romantic relationships** should occur between a member of staff (or volunteer or trustee) and a student, either on or off site.

### Intimate Relationships

#### Young People (Under 18s)

Staff are **not allowed** to enter any sexual/romantic relationships with any young persons with whom they have a **Professional Relationship**.

If it is found that a member of staff has entered an intimate relationship with a young student who is undertaking informal or formal education at the National Centre for Circus Arts, then a disciplinary investigation will take place which may result in the member of staff's dismissal.

#### Adults (18+)

Similarly, staff are not allowed to enter any sexual/romantic relationships with an adult student (18+) with whom they have a **Professional Relationship**. Applicants are asked to state if they have a **Personal Relationship** with a staff member or student upon application.

## Personal Relationships Prior to Appointment

The National Centre for Circus Arts recognises that **Personal Relationships** may exist when a member of staff is appointed or when a student enrolls.

It is the responsibility of the staff member to inform the hiring manager or Safeguarding Lead when a **Personal Relationship** with a student, overlaps with their **Professional Relationship**. Following this, alternatives will be sought in regard to teaching, tutoring or assessments.

If a **Personal Relationship** is not declared, and results in an unfair advantage or disadvantage (to either the student in the **Personal Relationship** or the other students on the course), this will be considered a serious matter that will lead to disciplinary action.

## Reporting

Should a Personal Relationship develop that a student wishes to report, they will not be penalised for participating in this relationship and would be protected from retaliation by the staff member if they reported harassment or sexual misconduct.