



## POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>EMPLOYEE STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility:</b> <b>SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES, &amp; FACILITIES SERVICES</b>
<b>Policy Section:</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	<b>Policy No: 5.28</b>
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### 5.28 EMPLOYEE STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

#### 1.0 Purpose

This policy outlines the College’s position and expectations on Personal Relationships between College Employees and Students. It also provides a mechanism for College Employees to disclose Personal Relationships between Employees and Students to avoid perceived or real Conflicts of Interest.

#### 2.0 Application and Scope

This policy is applicable to all Employees and Students at St. Clair College.

#### 3.0 Policy:

St. Clair College is committed to ensuring a safe, respectful, and positive learning environment for all Students. Ensuring positive and professional relationships between Employees and Students is critical to this commitment. Students must be able to thrive in an environment free from Conflicts of Interests or abuses of power, whether real or perceived, from College Employees.

When Employees interact with Students, they are in a position of trust and power. These relationships must not jeopardize the effective functioning of the College by the appearance of either favoritism or unfairness in the exercise of professional judgment. In relationships with Students, the Employee is expected to be aware of his/her professional responsibilities and to avoid apparent or actual Conflicts of Interest, favouritism or bias.

Personal Relationships between Employees and Students create the potential for actual and/or perceived Conflicts of Interest and abuses of power. These Personal Relationships expose all parties to harm and risk, both of which contradict the ability to Students to thrive and feel safe in their educational journey.

## ***Employee Student Relationships***

Personal Relationships as defined by this policy are strictly prohibited between a Student and an Employee who is in a position to either directly or indirectly exercise power or authority over that Student. Efforts by Employees to initiate these relationships are also strictly prohibited. Where a sexual relationship is initiated, pursued, or exists between a Student and an Employee who is in a position to either directly or indirectly exercise power or authority over that Student, the Sexual Misconduct Policy applies.

It is the College's expectation that College Employees always retain a professional and respectful relationship with Students. The College will take measures to mitigate the potential effects described above if the Personal Relationship may or does result in actual or perceived Conflict of Interest, abuse of authority, favouritism or preferential or different treatment of a Student by an Employee.

Administration must address Personal Relationships in their areas of responsibility and must be committed to ensuring that the work and learning environment is free from such harmful relationships. If a situation is brought forward directly or indirectly, Administrators must work with Human Resources to address the concern promptly.

Some specific examples of inappropriate relationships in which discipline may be imposed on the Employee include:

- An Employee engaged in a Personal Relationship with a Student that resulted in an actual or perceived Conflict of Interest.
- An Employee failed to disclose a Personal Relationship with a Student.
- An Administrator who was aware of such a situation failed to take action and address and report the Personal Relationship.

Employees who have entered into a personal relationship with a Student, even where this personal relationship pre-existed, shall immediately disclose such relationships in accordance with the disclosure obligations set out in this Policy and failure to do so will be considered a violation of this policy.

### **4.0 Definitions:**

#### **Personal Relationship**

A relationship that goes beyond the normal level of a relationship between a Student and Employee that is ordinarily present in an academic setting and includes, but is not limited to, close friendships, familial relationships, romantic and/or sexual relationships.

#### **Employees**

Includes all full-time Employees, part-time Employees and Contractors of St. Clair College at all locations.

#### **Student**

Any person who is enrolled in a course or program at the College.

#### **Administrator**

Any Employee of St. Clair College who supervises Employees.

## ***Employee Student Relationships***

**Conflict of Interest** - A Conflict of Interest is any situation where an Employee's Personal Relationship with a Student may conflict with or interfere with his/her responsibilities as a College Employee. Having direct or indirect influence in a decision that may affect a Student with whom the Employee has a Personal Relationship will give rise to a Conflict of Interest. Conflicts of Interest includes actual, potential, or perceived Conflicts of Interest.

**Perceived Conflict of Interest** – Exists when a reasonable well-informed individual could properly have a reasonable belief that an employee has an actual conflict of interest, even if there is no actual conflict.

**Potential Conflict of Interest** – Exists when an employee has a private or personal interest that could influence the performance of an employee's duties and responsibilities, even though he/she has not yet exercised that duty or responsibility.

### **5.0 Procedure:**

#### **5.1 Requirement to Declare**

Employees of the College have an obligation to report if they are in a Personal Relationship with a Student. Employees must understand that such relationships are or could be perceived to be a conflict of interest. If an Employee is looking to initiate a personal relationship with a Student, they must seek counsel from their HR Service Manager through this disclosure.

#### **5.2 Third Party Information**

The College is obliged to act on third party information regarding Employee and Student relationships.

#### **5.3 Reporting Obligations**

If an Employee suspects or is informed that another Employee is in a personal relationship with a Student, the Employee should advise their Administrator.

If an Employee is in a personal relationship with a Student, the Employee must take steps for the Employee to not be involved, directly or indirectly, with the teaching and evaluation of that Student and refrain from exerting any direct or indirect influence or responsibility over the Student's program or enrolment at the College. This includes, but is not limited to, abstaining from being involved in any selection process for courses, scholarships, bursaries, prizes, or employment decisions that could impact the Student, or to be involved in dealing with a complaint or an appeal involving the Student. The Employee must disclose this relationship through this policy.

An Administrator who is advised of a personal relationship between an Employee and Student shall, within 3 working days of the receipt of the information, advise the Human Resource Service Manager.

#### **5.4 Review and Actions**

Upon receipt of a disclosure, the Human Resource Service Manager will, in consultation with Senior Vice President, Human Resources & Facilities Services, review the relationship and the appropriate action to take. The breadth and nature of the fact finding to be undertaken will depend on the actual

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or perceived conflict of interest.

If a formal investigation is warranted, due to the potential or real conflict of interest, the Human Resource Service Manager shall proceed in accordance with the Sexual Misconduct Policy.