

BEE ACTIVE

Relationships at Work Policy

Introduction: Bee Active code of conduct describes professional standards concerning relationships between staff, it's customers and the impact that those relationships may have on the performance of the Company.

There is a need for clear advice following reviews of a number of critical incidents where personal relationships have compromised or potentially compromised relationships internally and externally and also following investigations into grievances.

Professional relationships become even more complex when strong personal feelings are present. The right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace is clearly identified in the Bullying, harassment and dignity at work policy.

Purpose or Aim: This policy describes the obligations of employees with regard to their social and business relationships with colleagues. It also sets out the principles that an intelligent professional should consider when addressing situations where these expectations have not been fulfilled.

Scope: This policy applies to all employees of Bee Active. It also applies to other workers carrying out their duties as part of the casual workers, for example bank and subcontracted staff. It applies to job applicants in so far as applicants are advised to declare "significant social relationships" with existing staff and service users.

Definitions: A significant social relationship is one where a person whose close relationship with an individual affects that individual's behaviour, attitudes and self-esteem. A significant social relationship usually exists with a family member, spouse, child, common law partner, close friend, sexual partner, business partner or a person who may serve as a role model to an individual or a person whose acceptance and approval is sought.

Policy Statement: At the earliest opportunity, staff should tell their line manager about any "significant social relationship" that they have with someone in a team in which they work or the Company serves. A failure to do this may lead to disciplinary action being taken against both parties.

The purpose of this confidential declaration is to ensure that both the Companies interests and the interests of individual members of staff are best protected. No member of staff is simply an employee. Staff enjoy social needs: personal friendships, romantic attachments and family relationships.

However, to protect staff, Employees employed by the Customers of the Company, staff should work with their managers to ensure personal relationships between staff do not compromise their work or lead others to believe that they might. Additionally, the professional relationships between some staff (e.g. line management relationships) are so important that they should not be compromised at all by the existence of a "significant social relationship".

Relations between existing staff: Typically, the Company does not have any interest in relationships between staff unless they operate in the same team and abuse that relationship to the detriment of others or are perceived by others to be in a position to do so.

Significant social relationships between members of the same team are generally discouraged because they may subconsciously affect decision making. However, in reality it is recognised that strictly professional relationships can naturally develop into significant social relationships.

Staff will be supported to best ensure that decision making cannot be compromised particularly where there is an early declaration. Nevertheless, staff must not enter into significant social relationships with members of staff who they directly line manage or supervise.

Staff should tell their line manager about any significant social relationship that they have with someone in their team at the earliest opportunity. It is recognised that a member of staff may be reluctant on grounds of confidentiality to make such a declaration or alternatively may be too embarrassed.

However, they are encouraged to do so, to protect themselves from any later allegations that the relationship has led to their professional practice in some way being compromised. It is a requirement of all managers that they sensitively and confidentially address any declarations of this kind.

Assuming the matter is not being addressed in a grievance or disciplinary context the manager will only consider; the nature of the relationship, any reasonably foreseeable damage to the Companies reputation, any reasonably foreseeable perceptions of colleagues, and any other reasonably foreseeable damage to the services.

The manager will only put in place arrangements necessary to manage any foreseeable threats recognising that the needs and rights of employees must not be compromised except where clearly necessary to do so. It is expected that it will only rarely be necessary to change any practice to manage any issues. Exceptionally it may be decided that the parties cannot continue to work in the same team.

Examples of changes to practice might be an agreement that two members of staff do not work together or will not work on the same shift together. However, it may be necessary to redeploy one or other of the parties based on a reasonable and documented consideration of all the facts in the case leading to this decision. This might arise, for instance, if two parties are married and rostering possibilities within their team mean that they could not regularly work opposing shifts.

Any such response will need to be handled sensitively and consistently.

Roles and Responsibilities

All employees and workers:

- Should not enter into any "significant social relationship" with anyone with whom they are in a line management or supervisory relationship;
- Must declare any "significant social relationships" with any work colleagues or employees of the Customers of the Company or their associates to their line managers at the earliest convenience.

All Managers and Supervisors will:

- Address all relevant discussions sensitively and confidentially;
- Consistently apply this policy, taking advice as appropriate;
- Maintain confidential records of all controls imposed, so that this can be referred to in case of future conflict.

This policy will be reviewed after 3 years or earlier at the request of either party.

Written July 2019 Ben Mills
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