

EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
STAFF TO STAFF FRATERNIZATION

DHJ
(LOCAL)

DEFINITIONS

As used in this policy:

TSD. TSD means the Texas School for the Deaf.

Director, Supervisor or Manager. Director, Supervisor or Manager are used synonymously and mean principal, assistant principal, supervisor, manager, superior, administrator, department head, director, executive, or any person who has authority over another person or evaluates any other person. Director, Supervisor or Manager shall include any person who has the authority and/or responsibility to hire, promote, discipline, evaluate, assign or direct faculty, staff or employees of the TSD.

Employee. Employee shall mean any person employed by the TSD in any capacity, whether faculty or staff, full or part-time.

Fraternization. Fraternization is not a concept susceptible to precise and narrow definition. Depending on the circumstances, fraternization may span the entire spectrum of amicable human social interaction, ranging from a passing greeting on the street to intimate sexual activity. The permutations of possible circumstances necessarily complicate an definition, there is no easily line drawn separating essential professional interaction from impermissible fraternization. Article 134, UCMJ

Personal Relationship. The term "personal relationship", as used in this Policy, is defined as two (2) employees getting engaged or married, becoming domestic partners, dating or entering into a romantic or sexual relationship or affair with each other; it is a strong, deep, or close association between two people that may range in duration from brief to enduring. This association may be based on inference, love, solidarity, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment. The prohibited relationships, which apply to both opposite-gender and same-gender relationships include, as an example, but not limited to:

--Ongoing business relationships.

--Dating, shared living accommodations other than those directed by operational requirements, and intimate or sexual relationships

DATING AND
FRATERNIZATION

General Rule

TSD encourages employees to develop friendships and share a spirit of teamwork and camaraderie both in the workplace and outside of work. In instituting this dating or fraternization policy, it is not TSD's goal to interfere with the development of coworker friendships and relationships. The policy identifies when these relationships are appropriate and when they are not.

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Dating, romantic involvement, undue familiarity, and close family relationships among employees with a subordinate are prohibited when the relationship would tend to create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, or would otherwise potentially inhibit the ability of any employee to perform his or her duties in an effective or efficient manner. One example of a circumstance covered by this policy is a situation where one party is in a supervisory relationship to another party and who has responsibility for managing the first party.

While TSD employees may date, develop friendships and relationships both inside and outside of the workplace as long as the relationships do not negatively impact work. TSD strongly discourages romantic relationships between coworkers who work in the same department. Even relationships between non-reporting employees can cause friction in the workplace and real, imagined or possible claims of favoritism or sexual harassment.

All employees will be held to the standards of the nondiscrimination and sexual harassment policies at all times.

SPECIFIC RULES
FOR
FRATERNIZATION

Managerial
Fraternization

The exception to the general policy allowing fraternization relates to managers and supervisors. Anyone employed in a managerial or supervisory role needs to heed the fact that personal relationships with employees who report to him or her may be perceived as favoritism, misuse of authority, or, sexual harassment; and, accordingly, managers and supervisors may not date any employee whom he or she manages or (actually or potentially) evaluates.

Because of the loss of employer flexibility and employee options, no employee may date another employee who is separated by more than one level in the chain of command.

Additionally, any fraternization with any employee who reports to a director or whose terms and conditions of employment such as pay raises, promotions, and advancement are potentially affected by the director is prohibited.

The fraternization that is prohibited by this policy includes dating, romantic involvement, and sexual relations; close friendships are discouraged in any reporting relationship.

SUPERVISOR/
SUBORDINATE
PERSONAL
RELATIONSHIPS

Under no circumstances may a director, manager or supervisor date, become romantically involved with, or have sexual relations with a reporting employee. They also should exercise caution about the impact of relationships with a non-reporting employee in the organization.

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FRATERNIZATION
AMONG NON-
EMPLOYEES OR
BETWEEN TWO
MANAGERS

Employees who disregard this policy will receive disciplinary actions up to and including employment termination.

TSD recognizes that employees have different definitions and understandings about what constitutes a close relationship, a friendship, or romantic involvement. Consequently, if you have questions or need further clarification, talk with TSD's Human Resources department. Their goal of implementing policies consistently and fairly will help inform your choices.

Friendships and social contacts between employees are not a matter of concern as long as they are consistent with the following guidelines. Employees may address any questions on this policy to the Director of TSD's Human Resources Department.

If two employees with no non-managerial status or two employees in supervisory positions are involved in a relationship that causes disruption to the workplace, they may be subject to remedial action including reassignment of duties and responsibilities, limiting of job functions and/or access to confidential information, but also possible disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Married employees may not work in the same department without written permission of the Superintendent. The Superintendent may, in her sole and absolute discretion, allow a married couple to work in the same department when she determines that it is in the best interest of the TSD. Her decision is not appealable.

If, over the course of the relationship, TSD finds any validity to claims of sexual harassment or favoritism, or if dissension in the office is created, TSD will take whatever action is deemed necessary, up to transfer or termination. Any relationship that interferes with the TSD culture of teamwork, the harmonious work environment or the productivity of employees will be addressed by applying the progressive discipline policy.

Adverse workplace behavior or behavior that affects the workplace that arises because of personal relationships will not be tolerated.

Adopted: 10-20-17
Amended: