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| Policy Name | WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS | | |
| Policy # | 715 | Category | 700: HUMAN RESOURCES |
| Steward | Director, Human Resources | Date Approved | April 11, 2024 |
| Next Review Date | | Date Reviewed or Revised | |

POLICY

Suncrest College values people, embraces diversity, practices inclusion, and educates one another with the intention of promoting human rights and ensuring the health and safety of the College community.

PURPOSE

To promote and maintain a safe and respectful college environment, employees of Suncrest College will not use their position inappropriately in interpersonal relationships with other members of the college community. College employees will conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in respect to their relationships with other members of the College community. College employees are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical manner at all times and will be held accountable for their actions.

PRINCIPLES

1. Employees conduct themselves and encourage others to conduct themselves, in a manner consistent with respect for personal dignity of individuals and in compliance with government legislation and applicable Suncrest College Operational Policies including but not limited to: Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest, and Anti-Harassment.
2. Employees maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to them by the College or its stakeholders and only collect, use or disclose such information as is required in the fulfillment of their duties.
3. Employees refrain from engaging in gossip in written or verbal form that would malign or otherwise damage a member of the college community or the reputation of the college.

4. The workplace relationship between employees and learners supports learning. The unequal power relationship inherent in employee-learner relationships increases the vulnerability of the learner. Employees are to establish and maintain appropriate and professional boundaries with learners and take steps to protect themselves from situations in which their relationship with a learner could be perceived as inappropriate. If an employee is unsure about what the appropriate professional boundaries, they should consult with their supervisor.

To maintain professional boundaries, employees should consult with their supervisor or Human Resources. To maintain professional boundaries with learners, employees *do not*:

- a. Engage in flirtatious, romantic, sexual and or intimate relationship with any learner over whom they have influence or could be perceived to have influence, unless such relationship is pre-existing and disclosed in writing to the out-of-scope supervisor.
 - b. Engage in other potentially problematic relationships with any learner over whom they have influence or could be perceived to have influence. Such relationships include, but are not limited to; teaching a member of ones immediate family or a close friend; excessive socializing with learners outside of class, either individually or as a group; giving or accepting money and / or substantial gifts from learners; giving rides to individual or groups of learner(s) on more than one occasion; drinking alcohol and / or spending time with learners where the learner may be drinking to excess; or using language, stories, or representations that are unrelated to the learning focus.
 - c. Use speech or engage in conduct that is reasonably regarded as offensive and substantially impairs the academic and work opportunity of learners.
 - d. Involving learners in interpersonal difficulties employee may be having at work or in their personal life.
5. The unequal power relationship inherent in supervisor-employee relationships increases the vulnerability of the employee. To maintain appropriate professional boundaries with employees, supervisors should be mindful of the development of workplace relationships with an employee, where one person may be likely to misunderstand the terms. To maintain professional boundaries with employees, supervisors *do not*:
 - a. Engage in flirtatious, romantic, sexual and or intimate relationship with any employee over whom they have influence or could be perceived to have influence, unless such relationship is pre-existing and disclosed in writing to the out-of-scope supervisor.

- b. Use speech or engage in conduct that is reasonably regarded as offensive and substantially impairs the work environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Suncrest College employees and is in effect at any college event, regardless of location or modality (i.e. traditional, distance, online, practicum, work placement, etc.).

DEFINITIONS

Workplace Relationships – Relationships, which are developed and maintained at Suncrest College. This includes but is not limited to, supervisor to employee, employee to employee, and employee to learner relationships.

Unequal Power relationship – A relationship in which one member has greater authority than the other by virtue of his / her position or his / her control of or access to resources i.e.; the instructor / learner relationship and / or supervisor / employee relationship.

Confidential Information – Information that employees have access to in order to do their jobs that is of a personal, private, or sensitive nature.

Professional Boundaries – This is an integral part of the learner – employee workplace relationship. They represent invisible structures imposed by legal, ethical, and professional standards that respect the rights of employees and learners. These boundaries ensure that the focus of the relationship remains on the learners' needs.

PROCEDURES

1. An employee will report in writing, to his / her supervisor, any situation in which he/she is aware of, develops or has an intimate and / or sexual relationship with another member of the college community in which an unequal power relationship exists or could be perceived to exist.
2. The employee who is in the position of greater influence or authority hold primary responsibility to disclose the relationship to their supervisor.
3. In the event a supervisor receives a written report of conduct, which appears to be in conflict with these guidelines, that supervisor, in consultation with Human Resources and the out-of-scope supervisor, shall take appropriate action.

4. Human Resources will ensure a letter is placed on the employee's personnel file with a copy to the employee, indicating the manner in which the matter has been concluded.
5. Any supervisor or employee who is aware, or made aware of an inappropriate workplace relationship involving one or more employees, or learners, where a potentially compromising position, or a conflict of interest, could potentially risk employees' or learners' rights to a respectful workplace or learning environment, is required to address or report these concerns as soon as possible.
6. The college is obligated to address all complaints of inappropriate conduct received, whether provided in writing or given verbally.
7. Substantiated cases of failing to follow these procedures or guidelines may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

LEGISLATIVE AND COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT REFERENCES

N/A

LINKS TO OTHER RELATED POLICIES, DOCUMENTS, AND WEBSITES

Policy 602- Anti-Harassment

Policy 702- Code of Ethics

Policy 711- Conflict of Interest