

### **Reuben College Policy on Student-Staff/Postholder Relationships**

*Agreed by Reuben College Governing Body, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025*

1. Positive professional relationships between members of staff and students are central to students' educational development and welfare. However, intimate or close personal relationships between students and staff who have responsibility for them can cause significant problems because of conflicts of interest, imbalance of power and authority, perceived favouritism, and undermining of trust and confidence in academic or other processes. Furthermore, the College is committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure that students are not subjected to sexual harassment.
2. Therefore, the College adopts and applies the [University Policy Concerning Staff-Student Relationships](#). All staff must comply with that policy in the College context.
3. Staff must familiarise themselves with the [policy](#), which provides guidance and defines each of the terms used (including 'responsibility for a student', 'intimate relationship' and 'close personal relationship'). This means that, to protect the welfare of students, and in the best interests of staff, the College:
  - a. Prohibits staff from having an intimate relationship with a student for whom they have any responsibility; and
  - b. Strongly discourages any other close personal relationship between a staff member and a student for whom they have any responsibility that transgresses the boundaries of professional conduct and requires such relationships to be declared to the Welfare Dean, Senior Tutor or President. (This is so that suitable measures to protect students' best interests can be taken, in accordance with Annex 5 of the [policy](#).)
4. Staff should note that this [policy](#) applies to all Fellows and members of staff who have academic, professional or pastoral responsibility for students ("Responsibility"). Due to the collegiate nature of the University this policy also applies to postholders who have pastoral duties to students from another college. It will apply to graduate staff members of the Decanal or Welfare teams in relation to relationships with students to whom they are actively providing pastoral support. In advertising any such roles, and in making any such appointments, this policy must be made clear. All references to 'staff' in this policy refer to individuals to whom this policy applies as set out in this paragraph.
5. Whilst acknowledging that at a graduate college's students and staff may be of a similar age, the power dynamic of a student-staff relationship is still in play. Intimate relationships between staff and any student for whom they hold any Responsibility are always inappropriate irrespective of whether the student did not object, appeared to give consent, gave consent or even instigated the behaviour.

6. All staff are bound by this [policy](#), irrespective of whether the relationship takes place on College premises or elsewhere. It covers face-to-face actions, as well as those which take place through other media such as emails, letters, telephone conversations, social networking sites, text messages, etc.
7. This policy operates alongside and is not intended in any way to limit or override, the College's general Harassment Policy and Procedure.
8. Should a staff member in a position of responsibility for a student become aware that the student's behaviour suggests the possibility of romantic or sexual interest in them, then it is their responsibility to report this to the Welfare Dean, Senior Tutor or President so that a replacement staff member can be found for the student. This prevents the original staff member from becoming vulnerable to allegations of sexual harassment. In taking protective measures the College will apply the principles at Annex 5 of the [University policy](#).
9. The College recognizes the sensitivities involved and will take all reasonable steps to keep concerns confidential. Information will only be shared with those who strictly need to know about the issues raised, including to provide support to the student and the member of staff or to initiate disciplinary action (as set out below). In dealing with reports, and respecting confidentiality, the College will follow the principles at Annex 4 of the [University Policy](#).
10. Any member of staff found to be engaging in an intimate relationship with a student for whom they have Responsibility, even with their consent, may be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal and/or removal of their College post. Failure to declare any other close personal relationship or to comply with any arrangements put in place under this policy (including those made following a declaration of a relationship under paragraph 3b above) may also lead to disciplinary action.