

Linacre College Policy on Student-Staff Relationships

1. The College is committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure that students and staff are not subjected to any form of harassment, including harassment that may arise from a student-staff relationship.
2. This policy applies to all Fellows and members of staff who have academic, professional or pastoral responsibility for students. Due to the collegiate nature of the University this also includes staff who have pastoral duties to students from another college. This policy also applies to graduate student members of the Decanal or Welfare teams, including the Junior Dean team and CR Welfare and Equality Officers. In advertising any such roles, and in making any such appointments, this policy must be made clear. Henceforward, all references to 'staff' in this policy refer to staff as defined in this paragraph.
3. Whilst acknowledging that at a graduate college students and staff may be of a similar age, the power dynamic of a student-staff relationship is still in play. Therefore, this policy prohibits such staff from engaging in romantic or sexual relationships with students for whom they hold any such responsibility. This responsibility is defined as actively supporting a student with their welfare, academic or other pastoral needs **on an individual basis, or holding a position of influence over College and/or University provision available to them.** For example, if the CR Welfare and Equality Officer is regularly meeting one-on-one with a student to support them through a difficult period, they would be deemed to hold responsibility for them. The CR Welfare and Equality Officer does not hold this responsibility for all students in the same way Staff in the Academic Office and Accommodation Office hold this responsibility for all students. Relationships where this responsibility is held are always inappropriate irrespective of whether the student did not appear to object, appeared to give consent, gave consent or even instigated the behaviour.
4. All staff (as defined in paragraph 2) 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.
5. This policy operates alongside and is not intended in any way to limit or override, the College's general Harassment Policy and Procedure.

6. 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 Senior Tutor or Principal so that a replacement staff member can be found to take over responsibility for the student.
7. The College recognises 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.
8. Any member of staff found to be engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student for whom they have responsibility, as defined in point 3, even with their consent, will be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.
9. The college never uses Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) or any other means of preventing its members from coming forward to raise complaints or discuss their experiences, including in relation to cases of harassment and sexual misconduct. The College offers students non-contact arrangements. These are practical arrangements that recognise that students in the college community can be in conflict and that maintaining a separation between them can be helpful. They are agreed practical steps that maintain this separation but also fair and equitable access to facilities. Non-contact arrangements do not restrict students from speaking about their experiences with those who are not directly party to these arrangements, and expire when either party ceases to be a student.

Approved by Governing Body: 8th March 2023