

Departmental/City Policy on Interdepartmental Relationships

Purpose: This policy aims to establish clear guidelines regarding romantic relationships between employees in the workplace. The City of Rocky River values a respectful, professional, and inclusive environment where employees can work together harmoniously. The policy provides guidance on manage potential conflicts of interest, maintain professionalism, and ensuring that all employees are treated fairly.

The policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, seasonal, and temporary workers across all departments and job roles within the city.

General Principles

- Professionalism First – All employees are expected to maintain a high standard of professionalism and ethical behavior in the workplace, regardless of personal relationships.
- Respect and Consent – Any personal relationship, including romantic or dating relationships, should be consensual, respectful, and not interfere with work responsibilities or relationships with other colleagues.
- Equal Treatment – Employees in romantic relationships must ensure that their relationship does not result in favoritism, harassment, or an adverse impact on the working environment of the work performance of others.

Disclosure of Relationships:

- Transparency – Employees who engage in a romantic relationship with a coworker are required to disclose the relationship to Human Resources if one of the following conditions are met:
 - They work directly with the person they are dating or in a reporting (chain of command) relationship with them.
 - There is a potential conflict of interest, such as influence over hiring, performance evaluations, promotions, or disciplinary decisions.
- Confidentiality – Any information disclosed under this policy will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and Human Resources will assess the situation to determine any appropriate actions and/or determine any conflicts of interest.

Reporting Relationships and Supervisory Roles:

- Avoid Conflicts of Interest: - Employees who are in a dating relationship and are in a position of authority (e.g. supervisor, manager, or director) over the other individual involved in the relationship must take steps to avoid conflicts of interest. If necessary, city administration and/or the Director of the department may consider a change in reporting relationships, job assignments, or job roles to ensure fairness and minimize any negative impact on the work environment.

- **No Direct Supervision:** In cases where employees in a romantic relationship are in a direct supervisory relationship, city administration and/or the Director of the department may reassign one of the individuals to a different department/division/shift or reporting structure to prevent any potential bias or undue influence. If applicable, the related union contract(s) will be consulted as well.

Harassment and Discrimination:

- **Zero Tolerance for Harassment:** Romantic relationships must not result in harassment or any behavior that could be construed as inappropriate or discriminatory. If any employee feels uncomfortable or believes that they are being harassed or subjected to inappropriate behavior due to a romantic relationship, they are encouraged to report the issue to HR immediately. All complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.
- **Retaliation Prohibited:** Retaliation against employees who report concerns or violations under this policy will not be tolerated.

Expectations for Conduct:

- **Workplace Behavior:** Employees involved in a romantic relationship must maintain a professional demeanor in the workplace. Public displays of affection or behavior that could create an uncomfortable or distracting environment for others need to be avoided.
- **Separation of Personal and Professional Lives:** Employees must make a conscious effort to separate their personal relationships from work. Any issues in the personal relationship should not affect workplace behavior, communication, or job performance.

Resolving Conflicts:

- **Dispute Resolution:** In the event that a conflict arises in a romantic relationship, employees are encouraged to seek guidance from HR to address the issue in a respectful and professional manner. The company will assist in finding solutions to ensure that both individuals are treated fairly, and the work environment remains unaffected.

Retaliation:

- **Protection from Retaliation:** Employees are protected from retaliation if they report violations or concerns related to this policy. Retaliation will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Violations of the Policy:

- **Disciplinary Action:** Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The severity of the discipline will depend on the nature of the violation, the impact on the workplace, and the individual's role in the relationship.

Policy Review and Updates:

- This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains current and effective in promoting a healthy, professional work environment. Changes to the policy may be made as needed.

Conclusion: The City of Rocky River, Ohio is committed to fostering a workplace where all employees can thrive. This policy ensures that relationships are managed in a way that maintains fairness, professionalism, and respect for all individuals. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please reach out to Human Resources for further clarification