



HARTPURY

Guidelines on Professional Boundaries

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1. SCOPE

- 1.1** All staff who come into contact with children and young people in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. This guidance has been produced to help staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct. Clarification of professional boundaries together with appropriate support and training will assist in ensuring staff do not place themselves at risk. Where staff are in any doubt, they should always seek guidance from their line manager.
- 1.2** The Education and Training Foundation and other professional bodies have Codes of Professional Practice which define the professional behaviour expected of all staff members.
- 1.3** Most staff work extremely hard to maintain good working relationships with students and provide supportive pastoral care whilst being sensitive to issues surrounding professional boundaries. However, failure to understand professional boundaries can lead almost any member of staff to make serious mistakes in the management of staff-student relationships.
- 1.4** Staff are firmly responsible for recognising when they are at risk of crossing professional boundaries and, if they are, of addressing the issue.
- 1.5** All staff need to recognise the importance of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries when dealing with students. All staff whatever their position, role, or responsibilities have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of young people.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

- 2.1** The Chief People Officer who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that these Guidelines are implemented, regularly reviewed and updated.
- 2.2** The Safeguarding team is the point of contact for managers to seek advice about the Guidelines.
- 2.3** All staff at Hartpury are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and protect students from discrimination and avoidable harm.
- 2.4** All staff have a duty to keep young people and vulnerable adults safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm.
- 2.5** All staff have a duty to follow the Hartpury Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures and to take action when a student discloses an issue requiring safeguarding action.
- 2.6** All staff have a responsibility to behave in accordance with the Hartpury Values, Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy and the Staff Code of Professional Conduct.
- 2.7** When individuals accept a role that involves working with young people and vulnerable adults, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.

- 2.8 Employers have a duty of care towards their employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which requires them to provide a safe working environment for staff and guidance about safe working practices. The Act also imposes a duty on employees to take reasonable care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings. In this respect, the duty of care towards both staff and students can be demonstrated through the use of these guidelines.

3. GUIDANCE ON MANAGING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES (PROCESS)

3.1 Duty of Care	
<p>All staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children and young people.</p> <p>All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people and vulnerable adults safe and to protect them from physical, sexual and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and students and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.</p> <p>Children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached;</i> <i>always act, and be seen to act, in the student's best interests;</i> <i>avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;</i> <p><i>take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.</i></p>
3.2 Making a Professional Judgement	
<p>This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the student which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists.</p> <p>Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the students in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.</p>	<p><i>This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior colleague. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted;</i> <i>always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with a senior manager;</i> <i>always record discussions and actions taken with their justification.</i>

3.3 Power and Positions of Trust	
<p>As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with young people and vulnerable adults in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a student cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and adults and staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Staff should not become personally involved with students and become their friend, confidante or surrogate parent.</p> <p>Wherever possible, staff should avoid behaviour, which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential.</p> <p>Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity. Where the person is a vulnerable adult it is potentially an offence.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should not:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage;</i> • <i>use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students;</i> • <i>use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with students, which may include that of a sexual nature.</i> • <i>Treat students differently because of outside relationships (e.g family friends or previous connections)</i>
3.4 Confidentiality	
<p>Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their job responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child or young person to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass the child or young person concerned.</p> <p>Confidential information about a student should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the students' identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>are expected to treat information they receive about students in a discreet and confidential manner;</i> • <i>if in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them should seek advice from a senior member of staff;</i> • <i>need to be cautious when passing information to others about a student; should follow the Hartpury's Safeguarding procedures when abuse is alleged or suspected and know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported.</i>

<p>There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection/safeguarding responsibilities.</p> <p>If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential they should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to a member of SMT.</p> <p>The storing and processing of personal information about students is governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Staff should refer to the Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice for further guidance.</p>	
<h3>3.5 Propriety and Behaviour</h3>	
<p>All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the well-being and best interests of young people and vulnerable adults. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, students and the public in general.</p> <p>individual's behaviour outside of work, should not compromise their position within the work setting, nor bring Hartpury into disrepute. Staff in contact with children and young people should therefore understand that safe practice also involves using judgment and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should not:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with young persons or vulnerable adults or act as a role model;</i> • <i>make sexual remarks to a student (including email, text, social media messages, phone or letter);</i> • <i>discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, students;</i> • <i>discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts;</i> • <i>make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such.</i>
<h3>3.6 Dress and Appearance</h3>	
<p>A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should wear clothing which:</i></p>

<p>appropriate to their professional role which may be different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.</p> <p>Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>promotes a positive and professional image;</i> • <i>is appropriate to their role;</i> • <i>is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative;</i> • <i>does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding;</i> • <i>is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans;</i> • <i>is not considered to be discriminatory.</i>
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3.7 Gifts

<p>Staff should be aware of the Hartpury's policy including arrangements for the declaration of gifts received and given.</p> <p>It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.</p> <p>There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.</p> <p>Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to students. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the student. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.</p> <p>Any reward given to a student should be agreed practice within Hartpury and not based on favouritism.</p> <p>Staff should also not give loans or money or make donations of monetary value to students.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared;</i> • <i>generally, only give gifts to an individual student as part of an agreed reward system;</i> • <i>where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all students equally;</i> • <i>not give loans or money to students; Refer to the Hartpury's Financial Regulations.</i>
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3.8 Infatuations

<p>Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for students to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop an infatuation. All situations should be</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <p><i>Report and record any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a student</i></p>
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<p>responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of all concerned. Staff should also be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach.</p> <p>A member of staff, who becomes aware that a student may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a senior colleague so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.</p>	<p><i>may be infatuated with a member of staff as soon as reasonably practical.</i></p>
<h3>3.9 Social Contact</h3>	
<p>Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with students or their families for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a student seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise their professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued. To avoid any doubt, the member of staff should raise this matter with their line manager who will then bring it to the attention of the Human Resources Department.</p> <p>Staff should not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home e-mail address to students. Internal communication systems should only be used to contact students. Staff should be aware that social contact in certain situations can be misconstrued as grooming.</p> <p>Staff should refer to the Social Media policy for further information.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>always obtain approval of any planned social contact outside of normal timetabled work, for example when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme;</i> • <i>advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a student which may give rise to concern;</i> • <i>report and record any situation, which they feel, might compromise Hartpury or their own professional standing; not use social networking sites which include personal information, including photographs, personal details, hobbies etc</i>
<h3>3.10 Physical Contact</h3>	
<p>There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student, an observer or by</i>

<p>Some staff, for example, those who teach sport, will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with students in order to support them so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise.</p> <p>Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be brought to the attention of a senior manager.</p>	<p><i>anyone to whom this action is described;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent;</i> <i>• always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny;</i> <i>• never indulge in horseplay; consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a student might misinterpret any such contact, perhaps involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable student in the demonstration.</i>
3.11 Showers and Changing	
<p>Students are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the students concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• avoid any visually intrusive behaviour;</i> <i>• and where there are changing rooms announce their intention of entering, avoid remaining in the room unless students need require it and avoid changing in the same place as students; never shower with students.</i>
3.12 Students in Distress	
<p>There may be occasions when a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age - appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.</p> <p>Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice from a senior manager.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed student;</i> <i>• always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed student;</i> <i>• record situations which may give rise to concern;</i> <i>• consider arranging for the student to be comforted by a member of staff of the same sex.</i>
3.13 Behaviour Management	
<p>All students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a student. The use of humour can help to</p>	<p><i>This means that adults should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• not use force as a form of punishment;</i>

<p>defuse a situation. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>try to defuse situations before they escalate;</i> • <i>keep parents informed of any sanctions if appropriate;</i> <p><i>adhere to the Hartpury's behaviour management guidelines.</i></p>
3.14 Care, Control and Physical Intervention	
<p>Staff may find themselves in a situation where they need to intervene legitimately to prevent a student from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property or to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should always have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others.</p> <p>The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.</p> <p>In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>always seek to defuse situations;</i> • <i>always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary;</i> • <i>always keep records of incidents which require force and notify parents;</i>
3.15 Sexual Contact with Young People and Vulnerable Adults	
<p>Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a young person or vulnerable adult is both inappropriate and illegal. Young people and vulnerable adults are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the student consents or not. This includes the prohibition on adults in a position of trust (see Section 3.3).</p> <p>The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>not pursue sexual relationships with young people or vulnerable adults either in or out of Hartpury;</i> • <i>avoid any form of communication with a student which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact and social networking messages.</i> • <i>not make sexual remarks to or about young people/vulnerable adults;</i> • <i>not discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of young people/vulnerable adults.</i>

<p>Any intimate relationship between any student aged ≥18 years and any staff member who has any responsibility for students, and which can include academic, professional services, administrative, or other support or leadership roles, in which the employee may be in a position to exercise a degree of influence over a student, is strictly prohibited. This is due to potential conflicts of interest, breaches of professional ethics, and the potential for exploitation due to the inherent power imbalance in these settings.</p> <p>There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as ‘grooming’ where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a ‘grooming’ process, which is an offence.</p>	
3.16 One to One Situations	
<p>Staff working in one-to-one situations with students may be more vulnerable to allegations. Lecturers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and students are met.</p> <p>Staff need to consider the environment they are in that may place them in vulnerable situations. Risk assessments should be undertaken where considered appropriate and arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.</p> <p>Pre-arranged meetings with students away from Hartpury premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent (under 18) and a senior manager.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>avoid meetings with students in remote, secluded areas of the campus;</i> • <i>ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations;</i> • <i>inform other staff of the meeting beforehand; assessing the need to have them present or close by;</i> • <i>avoid use of ‘engaged’ or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy;</i> • <i>always report any situation where a student becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague;</i> <p><i>consider the needs and circumstances of the student involved.</i></p>
3.17 Transporting Students	
<p>Staff should not transport students in their private vehicles. Other transport should be arranged such as the services of a taxi firm, use of pool vehicles.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p>

<p>Only in emergency situations should staff ever consider transporting a student in their private vehicle. Consideration should be given to an adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.</p> <p>Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Minibus drivers must comply with the Hartpury's Minibus requirements. Staff should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety;</i> • <i>not transport students in their private vehicles except in an emergency, always accompanied by another member of staff;</i> • <i>ensure that their vehicle is appropriately insured for business purposes.</i>
3.18 Curriculum	
<p>Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.</p> <p>The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to students questions can require careful judgement and staff may wish to take guidance in these circumstances from more experienced teaching colleagues or managers.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have clear written lesson plans;</i> • <i>not enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual activity.</i>
3.19 Photography, video and other creative arts	
<p>Many activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, enrichment activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement or assess performance</p> <p>Staff need to be aware of the potential for these aspects of teaching to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. Particular regard needs to be given when they involve young or vulnerable</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded;</i> • <i>ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability;</i> • <i>be able to justify images of students in their possession</i> • <i>avoid making images in one to one situations;</i>

<p>students who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place.</p> <p>Students who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming etc. in the teaching environment.</p> <p>Staff should remain sensitive to any students who appear uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation.</p> <p>Using images of students for publicity purposes will require their consent and that of their legal guardians, where they are under 18 years of age. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>not take, display or distribute images of students unless they have consent to do so.</i>
<h3>3.20 Internet Use and communication with young people</h3>	
<p>Staff should follow the Hartpury's IT Acceptable Use Policy at all times.</p> <p>Staff should not share any personal information with a young person. They should not request or respond to any personal information from the young person other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. Staff should not give their personal contact details to young people including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management. This also includes communications through internet based web sites.</p> <p>Under no circumstances should staff deliberately access inappropriate images. Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal and, if proven, will invariably lead to the individual being barred from work with children and young people.</p> <p>Using Hartpury equipment to access inappropriate or indecent material, including adult pornography, is likely to give cause for concern particularly if as a result students</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>follow the Hartpury's IT Policies;</i> • <i>not give their personal contact details to young people;</i> • <i>only use equipment e.g. mobile phones provided by the Hartpury to communicate with young people</i> • <i>only make contact with young people for professional reasons;</i> • <i>do not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages.</i>

might be exposed to inappropriate or indecent material.	
3.21 Whistleblowing	
<p>Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Hartpury has a clear and accessible Whistleblowing Policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.</p> <p>Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern in accordance with the Hartpury's Public Interest (Whistleblowing) Policy.</i>
3.22 Staying Overnight/Accommodation	
Staff should not share accommodation at any time with a student, nor should they invite students to stay overnight at their home.	
3.23 Trips and Outings	
<p>Staff should take particular care when supervising young people on trips and outings where the setting is less formal than the workplace. Where activities require overnight stays careful consideration should be given to sleeping arrangements. Young people and their parents should be informed of these. Staff should make careful attention to safe staff/student ratios and to the gender mix of staff especially on overnight stays.</p>	<p><i>This means that staff should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>always have another member of staff present in out of workplace activities unless otherwise agreed by a senior manager;</i> • <i>undertake risk assessments; have parental consent for the activity;</i> • <i>ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times;</i> • <i>Follow Hartpury's Study Trips & Visits Policy.</i>

3.24 Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All staff should be aware of the Hartpury's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

In the event of an incident occurring, which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a member of staff, the relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to Safeguarding Team

This means that staff should:

- *be familiar with the 'MyConcern' system for recording concerns and have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns to their designated person(s) for safeguarding;*
- *take responsibility for recording any incident, and passing on that information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of a student.*

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1** Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that any such guidance cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the guidance given by Hartpury. It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always advise their senior colleagues of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed.

Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads over any incident, which may give rise to concern.

- 4.1** The following questions may assist staff when they are considering the application of professional boundaries:

- Am I dealing in a different manner with a particular student than with others under the same circumstances?
- Is my dress, availability, language different from the normal with a particular student?
- Would I do or say this if a colleague or another third party were present?
- Would I condone my conduct if I observed it in another adult?
- Have I put a colleague or student in a difficult position as a result of my behaviour?
- Would I be able to implement the Hartpury Behaviour Management Procedures effectively, if necessary, with this student?
- If I were the parent would I want an adult behaving this way towards my own child?
- Do I know how to professionally respond if a boundary is crossed?
- Am I modeling the kind of boundaries and behaviour I would want students to develop themselves?

- 4.2** In summary, the following activities may place a member of staff at risk:

- failing to exercise their position of trust appropriately;
- becoming personally involved with students, being their friend, confidante or surrogate parent;

- providing their personal details such as home/mobile phone number, home e-mail address, social network site;
- communicating with students via social networking sites and not using internal communication systems to contact students;
- arranging to see students in private in non-Hartpury settings, e.g. attending students homes or social gatherings. If this cannot be avoided, two members of staff must be present at all times;
- giving gifts, loans or money to students;
- inviting students to their home, hotel room, personal social events, bars etc;
- having students stay overnight at their home;
- giving students lifts in their private vehicle;
- sharing their personal/ professional problems with students;
- not complying with the Hartpury's Data Protection Policy such as sharing personal information about a student with a third party without their permission;
- giving one student undue attention;
- giving certain students special privileges such as extended deadlines, private tutoring, without academic justification
- inviting physical contact or having unnecessary physical contact;
- being unnecessarily alone with a student;
- taking, displaying or distributing images of students unless you have their consent to do so;
- having any form of communication with a student which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative; and
- having a manner of dress and appearance which is not appropriate to their role.

4.2.1 Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and these professional guidelines could result in Criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

5. REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Professional Conduct
- Hartpury's Values Framework
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Staff/Student Relationships Policy
- Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Hartpury's Financial Regulations

6. FREEDOM OF SPEECH

As part of this policy, Hartpury reaffirms its commitment to the principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom, in accordance with the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 and guidance from the Office for Students (OfS). Hartpury will take all reasonably practicable steps to secure the right to express lawful views and engage in open debate without fear of censorship or institutional discipline for staff, students, and visiting speakers. In addition, this policy prohibits the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in any situation that would prevent staff from speaking out about misconduct, harassment, or other matters of public interest.

7. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As with all Hartpury policies and procedures, due care has been taken to ensure that this policy is appropriate to all members of staff and students regardless of their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or

belief, sexual orientation and transgender status.

The policy will be applied fairly and consistently whilst upholding Hartpury's commitment to providing equality to all. If any employee or student feels that this or any other policy does not meet this aim, please contact the HR Department (staff) or an academic tutor (student).

Hartpury is committed towards promoting positive mental health by working towards the MINDFUL EMPLOYER Charter, holds the Student Minds University Mental Health accreditation and has signed the AoC Mental Charter. Hartpury aims to create a culture of support within the workplace where employees can talk about mental health problems without the fear of stigma or discrimination.