



Staff-Student Relationships Policy

Higher Education · Performing Arts
Validated by the University of West London

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Document Control

Policy Title	Staff-Student Relationships Policy
Institution Name	Triple Threat Training Limited (trading as GAMTA)
Policy Category	Professional Boundaries, Safeguarding and Conduct
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Validating Partner	University of West London
Applicable Provision	All staff, students, visiting practitioners and short-term engagements across GAMTA provision, including the HNC Acting and Performance, which admits learners from age 16
External Regulatory Alignment	Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 (including abuse of a position of trust); Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007; Equality Act 2010; National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland; UK GDPR; Data Protection Act 2018
Related Policies	Safeguarding Policy; Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy; Student Code of Conduct; Staff Policy Manual
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TRIPLE THREAT COLLEGE**STAFF-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS POLICY**

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Triple Threat Training Limited, trading as GAMTA (the “College”) is committed to maintaining a learning environment in which the professional relationship between staff and students is characterised by trust, respect, and integrity. The teaching of performing arts depends on this relationship being free from any actual or perceived conflict of interest, abuse of position, or compromise of academic and artistic judgement.

1.2 Performing arts education involves close professional contact between staff and students in studios, rehearsal rooms, theatres, technical spaces, production environments, and on placements. It often includes physical work, vocal coaching, intimacy and partnering work, fight work, casting and role allocation, choreographic development, and the public-facing exposure of student work. These contexts make clear and well-understood expectations about staff–student relationships particularly important.

1.3 This Policy sets out the College’s expectations regarding personal, intimate, romantic, sexual, and other close relationships between staff and students, the obligations to disclose and manage such relationships where they exist, and the consequences of failing to comply. It applies in addition to, and not in place of, the College’s wider framework on conduct, safeguarding, harassment, and sexual misconduct.

2. Scope

2.1 This Policy applies to:

- all employees of the College, including academic, technical, production, and professional staff on any contractual basis;
- self-employed visiting practitioners engaged by the College, including guest choreographers, vocal coaches, accompanists, directors, dialect coaches, fight directors, and intimacy coordinators;
- contractors and agency staff with a teaching, supervisory, support, or pastoral function in respect of students;
- governors and others holding positions of authority in relation to students.

2.2 This Policy applies in respect of all current students of the College, including students on the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre, Top-up validated higher education programmes, HNC and HND provision, and any further specialist programmes within dance, singing, acting, and musical theatre.

2.3 This Policy applies wherever the staff–student relationship arises, including on College premises, on placements, at productions and public performances, on educational visits, and online.

2.4 Pre-existing relationships, including family relationships and relationships established before either party became associated with the College, are not prohibited by this Policy, but are subject to the disclosure and management arrangements at Section 6.

3. Definitions

3.1 “Staff” means any person within the scope of clause 2.1.

3.2 “Student” means any person registered as a student of the College, including applicants once an offer of a place has been accepted.

3.3 “Position of Trust”, in this Policy, means the relationship between a member of staff and a student arising from the staff member’s teaching, supervisory, assessment, pastoral, casting, placement, or other authoritative role in respect of the student or the student’s programme.

3.4 “Close Personal Relationship” means an intimate, romantic, sexual, or comparable personal relationship; a familial relationship by blood, marriage, civil partnership, or comparable bond; or a close financial relationship including business partnership or significant private financial dealing.

3.5 “Designated Safeguarding Lead” has the meaning given in the Safeguarding Policy.

3.6 “Designated Officer” means the College Principal or such other senior officer as the Principal designates for the purposes of this Policy.

4. Underpinning Principles

4.1 Position of Trust. The relationship between staff and students is one of trust and unequal power. The College recognises that staff influence student progress, assessment, casting, role allocation, references, placement opportunities, and access to industry contacts. Close Personal Relationships in this context risk actual or perceived abuse of trust, conflict of interest, and damage to students, staff, and the College community.

4.2 Student Welfare First. Where any conflict arises between staff personal interests and student welfare or integrity of assessment, the welfare and integrity issues prevail.

4.3 Transparency. Where Close Personal Relationships fall within scope of disclosure, transparency through prompt disclosure to the College enables them to be managed in the interests of both parties and of the student community.

4.4 Confidentiality. Information disclosed under this Policy shall be handled in accordance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Privacy and Information Security Policy, on a need-to-know basis.

4.5 No Retaliation. A person who makes a disclosure or raises a concern in good faith under this Policy shall not be subjected to detriment for having done so.

5. Prohibited and Discouraged Relationships

5.1 Prohibited: Students Under 18. Sexual, romantic, or intimate relationships between staff and any student under the age of 18 are absolutely prohibited and shall not be initiated or pursued under any circumstances. Sexual activity by a person in a position of trust with a person under 18 is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009. Conduct contrary to this clause shall be treated as gross misconduct under the Staff Policy Manual (Part B) and may engage criminal and safeguarding processes.

5.2 Prohibited: Active Position of Trust. Sexual, romantic, or intimate relationships between staff and students aged 18 or over are prohibited where the staff member is in an active Position of Trust in relation to the student. Active Position of Trust includes teaching the student, supervising the student, assessing the student, providing pastoral or wellbeing support to the student, casting or allocating roles to the student, supervising or organising the student’s placement, or holding any line management responsibility in respect of staff who do any of the foregoing in relation to the student.

5.3 Initiation Prohibited. Staff shall not initiate, pursue, or seek to develop a sexual, romantic, or intimate relationship with any current student, regardless of the absence of a direct Position of Trust at the moment in question, where the student is enrolled on a programme delivered by the

College. The asymmetry of power that arises from membership of the College community persists beyond the immediate teaching context.

5.4 Strongly Discouraged. Sexual, romantic, or intimate relationships between staff and students aged 18 or over, even outside an active Position of Trust, are strongly discouraged for the duration of the student's enrolment. Where such a relationship nonetheless exists, the disclosure and management requirements at Section 6 apply.

5.5 Close Financial Relationships. Close financial dealings between staff and students, including loans, business partnerships, employment of a student by a staff member in a personal capacity, or significant private financial dealing, are prohibited where the staff member is in an active Position of Trust in relation to the student, and shall otherwise be disclosed under Section 6.

5.6 Private Tuition and Coaching. Staff shall not provide paid private tuition, coaching, audition preparation, or similar services to current students of the College where they are in an active Position of Trust in relation to the student, save with the prior written authorisation of the Designated Officer. This applies to dance, singing, acting, audition coaching, and related provision.

6. Disclosure and Management

6.1 Duty to Disclose. A member of staff who has, develops, or has previously had a Close Personal Relationship with a current student, or with an applicant who has accepted an offer, shall disclose the relationship promptly and in writing to:

- their line manager or, where the line manager is the subject of the disclosure, the next level of management; and
- Human Resources (with copy to the Designated Officer where the matter is serious or sensitive).

6.2 When to Disclose. Disclosure shall be made as soon as reasonably practicable after the relationship arises, becomes known, or comes within scope of this Policy (for example, on the student becoming registered at the College or on the staff member acquiring a Position of Trust in respect of the student).

6.3 Content of Disclosure. The disclosure shall identify the staff member, the student, the nature of the relationship, the date the relationship began (so far as known), and any Position of Trust currently held in respect of the student.

6.4 Equivalent Disclosure by the Student. A student who is in a Close Personal Relationship with a member of staff may make an equivalent confidential disclosure to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head of Student Support Services, or the Office of the Principal. The College shall handle such disclosures sensitively, with the student offered support and information about their options. The Position of Trust under this Policy rests with the staff member, and disclosure obligations rest primarily with the staff member.

6.5 Management Plan. On receipt of a disclosure, the College shall, normally through Human Resources in consultation with the relevant Head of Department and the Designated Officer, agree a written management plan. The plan shall be proportionate to the matter and may include:

- removal of the staff member from teaching, assessing, casting, supervising, allocating roles to, or providing pastoral support to the student concerned;
- transfer of academic, assessment, casting, or placement decisions to an alternative member of staff with no relationship interest;
- transparent declaration of the relationship in any internal context where the staff member's involvement in a decision concerning the student could be questioned;
- monitoring of the arrangement, with periodic review;

- communication to other relevant staff on a strict need-to-know basis, with the consent of those concerned wherever reasonably possible;
- such other steps as are necessary to manage any actual or perceived conflict of interest.

6.6 Where Re-Allocation Is Not Possible. In a small institution, complete removal of a staff member from all interaction with a particular student may not always be possible. Where this is so, the management plan shall include enhanced transparency, second-marking, moderation, and oversight arrangements to safeguard the integrity of assessment and the welfare of both parties.

6.7 Refusal to Disclose. Failure to make a required disclosure under this Policy, or active concealment of a Close Personal Relationship, shall be treated as misconduct under the Staff Policy Manual (Part B), and may, depending on the circumstances, constitute gross misconduct.

7. Specific Performing Arts Considerations

7.1 Physical Contact in Teaching. Physical contact in the teaching of dance, singing, acting, choreography, partnering, fight work, and intimacy work is a normal and proper feature of performing arts education. Such contact shall be undertaken professionally, with verbal explanation and consent in line with the Safeguarding Policy and applicable intimacy and contact protocols. Physical contact in the teaching context is not, of itself, a Close Personal Relationship.

7.2 Intimacy and Contact Work. Intimacy coordinators or equivalent practitioners shall be engaged where appropriate. Staff shall not use the practical context of intimacy or contact work to develop or pursue a personal relationship with a student, nor shall they exploit the practical environment for personal gain or gratification. Such conduct shall be treated under the Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and under the Staff Policy Manual (Part B).

7.3 Casting and Role Allocation. Staff in casting or role-allocation positions shall declare any actual or perceived Close Personal Relationship and shall remove themselves from the casting decision in respect of the student concerned. Casting decisions shall be documented in a manner that supports challenge and review.

7.4 Productions and Performances. Where staff are involved in directing, choreographing, musical-directing, or otherwise creatively leading productions and performances in which a student with whom they have a Close Personal Relationship is performing, alternative leadership arrangements shall be put in place wherever reasonably possible, and the management plan at clause 6.5 shall apply.

7.5 Placements and Industry Engagement. Staff shall not use industry contacts, audition opportunities, or placement arrangements as a means of forming or sustaining Close Personal Relationships with students. Recommendations and references shall be made on professional merit alone and shall be capable of being demonstrably so.

7.6 Communications and Social Media. Communications between staff and students shall be conducted through College channels and within working contexts. Use of personal social media, personal messaging, or private telephone numbers to communicate with students on personal matters is discouraged. Staff shall not initiate or accept personal social media connections with current students where this could appear to compromise the professional relationship; professional networking platforms used for legitimate educational or industry purposes are acceptable.

8. Visiting Practitioners and Short-Term Engagements

8.1 Visiting practitioners and short-term engagement staff (including guest choreographers, vocal coaches, directors, dialect coaches, fight directors, and intimacy coordinators) form a recognised

and proper part of the College's teaching. They are within the scope of this Policy for the duration of, and in respect of, their engagement.

8.2 Visiting practitioners shall be made aware of this Policy at the point of engagement and shall confirm their acceptance of it. The College's engagement letters or contracts shall reference this Policy.

8.3 Visiting practitioners with a Close Personal Relationship with any current student shall declare it before the engagement begins, and the College shall consider whether the engagement may properly proceed.

9. Relationships Arising From Outside the College

9.1 Family Relationships and Pre-Existing Relationships. The College does not seek to prohibit pre-existing family relationships or other Close Personal Relationships that pre-date the student's enrolment or the staff member's engagement. Such relationships shall be disclosed under Section 6 and managed under a written plan to avoid conflict of interest.

9.2 Disclosure at Application or Recruitment Stage. Applicants for a student place who have a Close Personal Relationship with a current member of staff shall declare it as part of the application process. Applicants for a staff position who have a Close Personal Relationship with a current student shall declare it as part of the recruitment process. Such disclosures shall not, of themselves, prevent the application from proceeding, but shall enable proper management.

10. Breach of Policy

10.1 Breach by Staff. Breach of this Policy by a member of staff shall be addressed under the Staff Policy Manual (Part B). Depending on the circumstances, breach may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct. Particular categories of breach, including breach involving a student under 18, breach of the criminal law, or breach involving abuse of a Position of Trust, shall normally be treated as gross misconduct and may engage safeguarding and criminal processes.

10.2 Where the conduct also engages the Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, that Policy shall apply alongside this one, with trauma-informed handling.

Where a breach of this Policy results in action that would affect a student's continuation, progression, registration or award on validated higher education provision, that action is taken under the relevant student policy and, where it affects the University award, in liaison with the University of West London through the Academic Partnership Link Tutor.

10.3 Allegations Against Staff. Allegations of breach of this Policy shall be considered in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy provisions on allegations against staff (where applicable) and the Staff Policy Manual (Part B). Precautionary suspension may be considered where appropriate, as a neutral act, in accordance with the Staff Policy Manual.

10.4 Student Welfare. Where a student is affected by an alleged breach, the College shall offer appropriate support, including access to Student Support Services, signposting to external support, consideration of academic mitigation, and protection from any retaliation. Where the student wishes, an academic review of any decisions taken by the staff member concerned shall be arranged.

11. Confidentiality, Records, and Review

11.1 Information relating to disclosures, management plans, and breaches under this Policy shall be handled in accordance with the Privacy and Information Security Policy, on a need-to-know basis, and processed lawfully under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

11.2 Records of disclosures and management plans shall be retained securely by Human Resources for the duration of the relationship in question and for a period thereafter as set out in the Privacy and Information Security Policy and the Records Management and Data Retention Policy. Records of breaches and disciplinary outcomes shall be retained in accordance with the Staff Policy Manual.

11.3 An anonymised summary of disclosures and management arrangements shall be reported annually to the College Principal and, where the volume or nature of cases warrants, to the Academic Board.

11.4 This Policy shall be reviewed periodically, and in any event at least every three (3) years, or earlier where required by legislative, regulatory, or operational changes, in consultation with staff and student representatives.

END OF POLICY