



ST. HUGH'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

ST HUGH'S APPROACH TO ROMANTIC AND SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STAFF AND STUDENTS

Date Policy Ratified by Governing Body: 21 May 2025

Author/Responsible Officer: Robert Vilain, Senior Tutor

Date to be reviewed by: 21 May 2027

ST HUGH'S APPROACH TO ROMANTIC AND SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STAFF AND STUDENTS

A close academic relationship between staff who have teaching, professional or pastoral responsibility and student may cause the boundaries between the personal and the professional to become blurred. It is essential that all staff appreciate that there is an imbalance of power and authority in the relationship; students may be keen to impress, and may not wish to appear rude or to give offence. It must be clearly understood by staff in a position of teaching, professional or pastoral responsibility that students are in a position of vulnerability which must not be taken advantage of (whether deliberately or inadvertently).

Therefore, it is St Hugh's College policy that it is always inappropriate for a member of staff to have a romantic or sexual relationship with any student for whom they have teaching, professional or pastoral responsibility, irrespective of whether the student did not appear to object, appeared to give consent, gave consent or even instigated the behaviour. Should a staff member in a position of teaching, professional or pastoral responsibility for a student become aware that the student's behaviour suggests the possibility of romantic or sexual interest in the staff member, then it is the responsibility of such staff to draw this to the attention of the Senior Tutor or Principal so that a replacement staff member can be found for the student. This prevents the original staff member from becoming vulnerable. If the member of staff is unsure whether or not a student's behaviour should be disclosed, they should disclose it.

Any member of staff found to be engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student for whom they have teaching, professional or pastoral responsibility, even with consent, will be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.