**Employee Relationships at the Workplace**

A workplace is strictly meant to maintain business relations with colleagues and associates of the organisation. It is necessary to define certain ground rules that define the impact of building personal relationships with each other. Such relationships that are not of businesses in nature may cause employees to act irrationally or take biased business decisions that may be detrimental to the interests of the organization.

**WHEREAS**, the Company wishes to procure the services of Employee under the terms and conditions set forth and Employee wishes to be employed on these terms and conditions.

**WHEREAS**, the parties to this Employee Agreement wish to enter into a written expression of their relationship as Employer and Employee.

# **Objective**

A workplace is defined as an arena for like-minded people who gather or work together in order to conduct business on behalf of an organization and help it to grow. It is necessary to define certain ground rules for employees that define the impact of building relationships with colleagues or other members of the staff. Relationships between employees which are not of business in nature may cause employees to - at times - act or decide favorably or discriminately or irrationally or with partiality that may be detrimental to the interests of the organization.

The policy also defines the process for hiring or working with spouse, siblings or any close blood relation within the same organization.

# **Scope and Applicability**

This policy applies to all the employees regardless of gender, sexual orientation or blood relations and applies to situations leading to undue influence in business decisions, appraisals, promotions, transfers, allotments/allocations, investigations, audit, finance, procurement, facilities and benefits.

**THEREFORE**, in consideration of the agreements contained in this Employee Agreement, the parties, intending to be legally bound, agree as follows:

# **Policy/Process**

In consideration of the agreements contained in this Employee Agreement, the parties, intending to be legally bound, agree as follows: A

## 3.1. Before you start a relationship with a colleague

## Before you decide to have a relationship with a colleague, please consider any problems or conflicts of interest that may arise. For example, if you’re working with a colleague on an important project, a relationship between the two of you (or a possible breakup) could affect your work. Make sure you’ve thought about all parameters before making a decision.

## 3.2. Acceptable behavior

While we don’t object to employee relationships, our workplace is still a professional set up. We expect our employees to treat each other with respect and avoid hindering other people’s work. No employee, irrespective of their position or level in the organization, is allowed to do anything that may embarrass or expose their colleague and should always respect their time, privacy and choices.

## 3.3. When you begin Relationship with a colleague

HR won’t get involved in employee’s private lives and will always be discreet, as long as there’s no disruption in the work, workplace or your colleague’s work.

Also, make sure to:

* Keep your personal issues and discussions out of the workplace.
* Be productive and focused as always. If you find that your work is affected by dating a colleague, seek counselling from your manager, HR or specialized employee (e.g. company psychologist).

## 3.4. Acceptable Behavior

We expect you to always behave appropriately and follow ourCode of Conduct. This means you and your partner shouldn’t behave in a manner that:

* Hinders any of the company’s operations.
* Embarrasses your other colleagues
* Distracts your colleagues from their duties

Examples of acceptable behaviour are:

* Passing by your partner’s office to talk to them for a short time.
* Discussing your joint vacation plans during breaks
* Coming to and leaving from work together

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are:

* Arguing in the workplace.
* Kissing or touching each other inappropriately in the workplace
* Exchanging an excessive number of messages or calls during working hours
* Boasting about or discussing your relationship with other colleagues
* Misusing office equipment, facilities or media for such activities
* Spending time together during working hours causing disruption on deliverables

Employees who exhibit unacceptable behavior will faceprogressive discipline.

## 3.5. After you stop a relationship with a colleague

If a relationship with a colleague ends abruptly for any reason, both the impacted employees must maintain utmost professionalism, ensure there is no disruption to work and/or cause any disturbance at the workplace or share any such personal information to other colleagues. All these will result in violation of our Code of Conduct policy about respect in the workplace and will face disciplinary action. Report any such incident to HR.

Impacted employees facing emotional or psychological distress or disturbance, ask HR about *<the Employee Assistance Program>*.

## 3.6. Relationship with managers

To avoid accusations of favoritism and abuse of authority, we strictly discourage supervisors / managers from dating their team members or those who report to their team members (directly or indirectly). HR should be approached in such situation so as to obtain appropriate guidance or remedies

## 3.7. When one of the current / former partners becomes a manager

If an employee gets promoted or gets transferred from another department, they may find themselves managing a colleague they are dating or used to date or are blood relations. In this case, HR needs to be informed for appropriate resolution to avoid any future complications.

Document every information necessary for HR to review and provide appropriate resolution as per policy.

### 3.7.1. Couples who are married or in a domestic partnership

Irrespective of gender of couples, those who are married or in a live-in relationship or domestic partnership are not allowed to work in the same function or department nor can they have any reporting relationship nor can they be hired in the same function or department.

The following remedies are suggested for such situations:

* One of the partners should get a transfer within <3 months> from such situation to another function or department that has no reporting relationship with each other.
* One of the partners should eventually quit the organisation. This option will be the only solution if a transfer is not possible (like in cases where there’s no position relevant to you in another department).
* HR will not influence on which of the partners should get transferred or eventually quit as these decisions must be taken and agreed to by the partners themselves

## 3.8. Our company’s commitment about relationships in the workplace

Just like we expect employees to comply with the policy, HR has the responsibility to fulfil. That is to:

* Enforce this policy equally to all employees including HR and Senior management
* Treat everyone equally while taking appropriate decisions without discriminating against any individuals or both
* Prohibit victimization,conflict andretaliation of any kind
* Examine each case separately and consider all aspects and perspectives before making decisions
* Follow the equal employment opportunity policy at all times. For example, HR will not penalize a homosexual couple differently than a heterosexual couple when they both have violated our employee relationships policy in the same manner.

# **Special Circumstance and Exception**

Any Deviation to this policy has to be approved by HR. Any changes to the policy have to be approved by Legal and Compliance.

# **Non-compliance and Consequence**

Employees and co-workers maintaining relationships without informing their individual Managers or HR will be seriously viewed by the management as a violation of this policy and appropriate steps that will impact either or both parties will be initiated by HR.