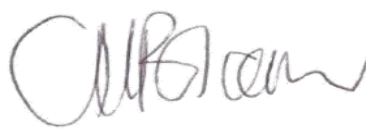


P O L I C Y

**PROFESSIONAL BOUDARIES AND APPROPRIATE
HUGENOTE KOLLEGE STAFF-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS**

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	
COMPILED / REVIEWED BY	AUTHORISED BY
HUMAN RESOURCES	HUGENOTE KOLLEGE MANAGEMENT
Title: CFO	Title: RECTOR
Title: Ms M Payne	Title: Prof. CHM Bloem
Date: 21/06/2026	Date: 24/06/2026
	
Signatures	
Policy Category: Human Resources	Review Cycle: Every three (3) years

Revision Record			
	Notes	Number	Date
Previous Version		n/a	n/a
New Version	New policy	1	12 June 2026
Approved for Issue			24 June 2026
Planned Revision			1 st Semester 2029



Index of Contents

Description	Page Nr
Title Page	1
Revision Record Sheet	1
Index of Contents	2
1. Policy Title	3
2. Policy Category	3
3. Approval Authority	3
4. Responsible Office	3
5. Effective Date	3
6. Review Cycle	3
7. Purpose	3
8. Scope	4
9. Legislative and Regulatory Framework	4
10. Definitions	5
11. Policy Statement	5
12. Guiding Principles	6
13. Prohibited Conduct	6
14. Social Media and Digital Communication	8
15. Disclosure Requirements	8
16. Reporting Mechanisms	9
17. Investigation Process	9
18. Disciplinary Action	10
19. Support Services	10
20. Training and Awareness	10
21. Record Keeping	10
22. Policy Breaches and Non-Compliance	11
Annexure A: SOP - Management of Professional Boundary Matters	12



1. POLICY TITLE

Policy on Professional Boundaries and Appropriate Hugenote Kollege Staff-Student Relationships

2. POLICY CATEGORY

Human Resources

3. APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Hugenote Kollege Management

4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE

Human Resources

5. EFFECTIVE DATE

24/06/2026

6. REVIEW CYCLE

Every three (3) years or earlier if legislative or regulatory amendments require review.

7. PURPOSE

Professional boundaries between staff and students must be maintained at all times. These boundaries protect the integrity of the educational relationship by ensuring that staff authority, influence, access to information, assessment responsibilities, pastoral roles or institutional decision-making are not used, or perceived to be used, for personal, social, romantic, sexual, financial or other inappropriate purposes.

Clear boundaries are necessary because staff–student relationships are not relationships between equal parties. Staff members may hold direct or indirect power over a student’s academic progress, well-being, opportunities, reputation or institutional standing. Boundary management is therefore central to student safeguarding, procedural fairness, academic integrity, ethical leadership and institutional trust.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Promote a safe, respectful, ethical, and professional learning environment;



- Protect students and staff from exploitation, coercion, favouritism, harassment, or conflicts of interest;
- Maintain academic integrity and public trust in the institution;
- Establish clear professional boundaries between staff and students;
- Ensure compliance with South African higher education governance and quality assurance expectations;
- Provide procedures for disclosure, reporting, investigation, and management of boundary violations.

This policy recognises the unequal power relationship that may exist between staff and students and seeks to prevent abuse of authority or perceived unfair advantage.

8. SCOPE

This policy applies to the following groups associated with Hugenote Kollege:

- All permanent and temporary employees;
- Academic staff;
- Administrative and support staff;
- Tutors, facilitators, mentors, coaches, and contracted personnel;
- Visiting lecturers and consultants;
- Students enrolled at the institution;
- Online, blended, and face-to-face interactions;
- Off-campus activities linked to institutional functions.

9. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy is informed by:

- Higher Education Act 101 of 1997;
- Council on Higher Education quality assurance principles and good practice guidance;
- Institutional governance and academic integrity principles;
- South African labour legislation;
- Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995;
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997;
- Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998;
- Protection from Harassment Act;
- Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA);
- Institutional disciplinary codes and codes of ethics.



10. DEFINITIONS

10.1 Staff

Any employee, contractor, tutor, mentor, facilitator, volunteer, or person acting on behalf of the institution.

10.2 Student

Any registered student, prospective learner participating in institutional processes, or graduate awaiting certification, including former students where staff members continue to exercise institutional influence over admissions, certification, bursary allocations, disciplinary processes or employment opportunities.

10.3 Professional Boundary

The ethical and professional limits that define appropriate interactions between staff and students.

10.4 Conflict of Interest

A situation where personal, romantic, financial, or familial relationships compromise or may reasonably appear to compromise objectivity, fairness, or professional judgment.

10.5 Intimate Relationship

Any romantic, sexual, emotionally intimate, or exploitative relationship.

10.6 Boundary Violation

Conduct that breaches professional standards, including favouritism, inappropriate communication, harassment, grooming behaviour, or abuse of authority.

11. POLICY STATEMENT

Hugenote Kollege is committed to maintaining professional relationships between staff and students that support academic integrity, fairness, equality, dignity, and student wellbeing.

Staff members must maintain clear professional boundaries with students at all times.

This policy must be read together with the Hugenote Kollege Personnel Policy, Disciplinary Code, Harassment Policy, Ethics Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Social Media Policy, POPIA Policy and Student Code of Conduct.

Any relationship or conduct that may create:

- a conflict of interest;
- actual or perceived favouritism;



- coercion;
- exploitation;
- intimidation;
- compromised academic judgment

is prohibited or subject to mandatory disclosure and management.

12. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Hugenote Kollege adopts the following principles:

12.1 Academic Integrity

Assessment, supervision, admissions, and academic decision-making must remain fair and unbiased.

12.2 Duty of Care

The institution has a responsibility to provide a safe educational environment.

12.3 Respect and Dignity

All interactions must uphold human dignity and constitutional rights.

12.4 Power Imbalance Recognition

Staff occupy positions of authority and influence over students.

12.5 Transparency and Accountability

Potential conflicts must be disclosed and managed appropriately.

13. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The following conduct is prohibited:

13.1 Romantic or Sexual Relationships

A staff member may not engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student where:

- the staff member teaches, assesses, supervises, mentors, advises, recruits, disciplines, or supports the student;
- the staff member has direct or indirect academic influence over the student;
- the relationship compromises institutional integrity.

13.2 Grooming Behaviour

Grooming behaviour is prohibited and may include:

- excessive personal attention;
- inappropriate gifts;



- flirtatious communication;
- emotionally manipulative conduct.

13.3 Preferential Treatment

Preferential treatment is prohibited and may include:

- unfair grading;
- access to opportunities;
- academic favours;
- employment opportunities;
- accommodation allocations;
- bursaries/financial aid;
- access to institutional opportunities;
- financial assistance linked to personal relationships.

13.4 Inappropriate Communication

Staff may not:

- send sexually suggestive messages;
- communicate inappropriately on social media;
- engage in any inappropriate communication outside professional purposes.

13.5 Retaliation

Retaliation against a complainant or witness is strictly prohibited.

13.6 Financial Relationships

Staff may not lend money to students, borrow money from students, act as surety, enter into private business arrangements with students, or provide personal financial assistance outside approved institutional processes.

13.7 Social functions and gatherings

Staff may not consume alcohol with students, or attend, host or facilitate parties or social gatherings with students, in private, informal or semi-private contexts where professional boundaries may become blurred, compromised, or may reasonably appear to be compromised.

This restriction does not apply to formal, institutionally organised or institutionally approved functions where alcohol is permitted by the College, provided that staff remain responsible



for maintaining professional conduct, appropriate boundaries, and the safeguarding of students at all times.

14. SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

14.1 Professional Communication Channels

Hugenote Kollege communication platforms and official email addresses must be used wherever possible.

14.2 Personal Social Media

Staff should avoid:

- private or secretive online interactions with students;
- sharing inappropriate personal content;
- engaging in online conduct that undermines professionalism.

14.3 Online Learning Environments

Professional standards apply equally in:

- WhatsApp groups;
- LMS platforms, Interface, MyNotes;
- video conferencing;
- social media;
- email communications.

15. DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

15.1 Mandatory Disclosure

Any existing or developing relationship that may create a conflict of interest must be disclosed immediately to:

- Human Resources;
- the line manager;
- the Rector / CEO.

15.2 Management Measures

Hugenote Kollege may:

- remove supervision responsibilities;
- reassign assessment duties;
- appoint independent moderators;



- restructure reporting lines.

Failure to disclose may constitute misconduct.

16. REPORTING MECHANISMS

Any student, staff member, or third party may report suspected boundary violations.

Reports may be made through:

- HR Office;
- anonymous whistleblowing channels.
- The Rector/CEO

Reports must be treated confidentially and sensitively.

Anonymous complaints can only be investigated where sufficient information exists for a fair assessment.

17. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

17.1 Preliminary Assessment

Hugenote Kollege will conduct an initial risk assessment within five (5) working days.

17.2 Formal Investigation

Where warranted:

- an independent investigator may be appointed;
- all parties will be afforded procedural fairness;
- records and digital evidence may be reviewed.

17.3 Interim Measures

Hugenote Kollege may implement:

- temporary suspension;
- reassignment;
- no-contact directives;
- removal from teaching duties.

The above is conducted with reference to procedural and substantive fairness and applicable labour legislation.

17.4 Presumption of Fair Treatment

Allegations do not constitute proof of misconduct. All parties must be treated fairly and respectfully until an outcome has been determined through an appropriate process.



18. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Violations of this policy may result in:

- counselling;
- written warnings;
- suspension;
- dismissal;
- student disciplinary action;
- referral to external authorities where legally required.

Serious misconduct involving harassment, coercion, or abuse of power may result in immediate disciplinary proceedings.

19. SUPPORT SERVICES

The institution will provide where applicable to parties negatively affected by the consequences:

- counselling support;
- employee wellness support;
- student wellness services;
- academic support measures where necessary.

20. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Mandatory induction and periodic refresher training shall be conducted on:

- professional ethics;
- sexual harassment prevention;
- safeguarding;
- digital professionalism;
- conflict-of-interest management.

All new staff and students must receive orientation on this policy.

21. RECORD KEEPING

Hugenote Kollege shall maintain confidential records of:

- disclosures;
- complaints;
- investigations;
- outcomes;



- corrective measures.

Records shall be retained in accordance with institutional policy and POPIA requirements.

22. POLICY BREACHES AND NON-COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with this policy constitutes misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.



ANNEXURE A: SOP - MANAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARY MATTERS

1. PURPOSE

To provide a standardised process for reporting, assessing, investigating, and resolving professional boundary concerns involving staff and students.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
HR Manager/ CEO/Rector	Receive and manage staff-related complaints
Registrar / COO	Oversee academic integrity matters
Student Support	Student support and reporting
Line Managers	Monitoring and escalation
Staff Members	Compliance and disclosure
Students	Reporting concerns

3. PROCEDURE

Step 1: Reporting

Complaints may be submitted:

- verbally;
- in writing;
- online;
- anonymously.

Reports must include:

- names of parties;
- description of conduct;
- dates;
- supporting evidence where available.

Step 2: Intake and Risk Assessment

Within five (5) working days:

- assess immediate safety risks;
- determine if interim measures are needed;
- classify complaint severity.



Step 3: Interim Protective Measures

Possible actions:

- separating parties;
- reassignment of classes;
- suspension of supervisory functions;
- restricted communication directives.

Step 4: Formal Investigation

Investigation shall include:

- interviews;
- document review;
- electronic communication review;
- witness statements.

Investigations should ordinarily be completed within thirty (30) working days.

Step 5: Outcome Determination

A formal report shall:

- summarise findings;
- identify policy breaches;
- recommend corrective action.

Step 6: Disciplinary Process

Where misconduct is found:

- disciplinary hearings shall proceed according to institutional procedures;
- sanctions shall be proportionate to severity.

Step 7: Appeals

Parties may appeal within ten (10) working days.

Step 8: Closure and Monitoring

HR shall:

- monitor compliance;
- provide support interventions;
- evaluate institutional risk patterns annually.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

All proceedings shall remain confidential except where:



- disclosure is legally required;
- there is risk of harm;
- institutional reporting obligations apply.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Staff Disciplinary Code
- Social Media Policy
- Ethics Policy
- Sexual and Romantic relations Policy

6. APPROVAL

Name	Position	Signature	Date
Ms M Payne	HR/CFO		2026/06/24
Prof CHM Bloem	CEO/Rector		2026/06/24