

Workplace Relationships Policy

For Australian Small & Medium Enterprises

Template Version 1.0 | June 2026

Important Notice

This template is provided as a general guide only. Workplace relationships policies require careful consideration of privacy, discrimination, and harassment laws. We recommend having this policy reviewed by a legal or HR professional before implementation.

1. Introduction

[Company Name] recognises that personal relationships may develop between employees. We respect employees' right to privacy in their personal lives while also maintaining our responsibility to ensure a professional, safe, and fair workplace.

This policy sets out our expectations for managing personal relationships at work to protect all employees and the organisation.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set clear expectations for workplace relationships
- Prevent conflicts of interest and perceptions of favouritism
- Protect employees from harassment and unwanted advances
- Maintain a professional workplace environment
- Provide a framework for managing relationship disclosures
- Protect the organisation from associated risks

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including:

- Full-time, part-time, and casual employees
- Contractors and temporary staff
- Directors and senior management

It covers romantic or intimate relationships between employees, and relationships between employees and external parties where there is a business connection (such as suppliers, customers, or clients).

4. Our Approach

[Company Name] does not prohibit personal relationships between employees. However, we require that:

- All relationships are consensual
- Relationships do not create conflicts of interest
- Relationships do not affect work performance or professionalism
- Certain relationships are disclosed where required
- Professional boundaries are maintained at work

5. Consent and Respect

All workplace interactions must be consensual and respectful. Employees must:

- Respect colleagues who decline romantic interest
- Accept "no" gracefully and not persist
- Never use their position to pressure someone into a relationship
- Be aware that what feels like friendly interest may be unwelcome

Unwanted romantic attention may constitute harassment and will be dealt with under our Harassment & Bullying Policy.

6. Relationships Requiring Disclosure

The following relationships must be disclosed to HR or management:

6.1 Reporting Line Relationships

Any romantic relationship where one party has direct or indirect supervisory authority over the other. This includes:

- Manager and direct report
- Skip-level relationships (manager's manager)
- Functional reporting relationships
- Project team lead and team member

6.2 Decision-Making Relationships

Any relationship where one party can influence decisions affecting the other, such as:

- HR staff and employees
- Finance staff and those involved in expense claims
- Those involved in hiring, promotion, or disciplinary decisions

6.3 External Relationships

Relationships with external parties where there is a business connection:

- Suppliers or vendors

- Customers or clients
- Competitors
- Contractors or consultants

7. Disclosure Process

If you are in a relationship that requires disclosure:

- Disclose the relationship to your manager and/or HR promptly
- Disclosure can be made verbally initially but should be confirmed in writing
- Both parties are expected to disclose, though one disclosure is sufficient
- Disclosures will be treated confidentially

Failure to disclose a relationship that should be disclosed may result in disciplinary action.

8. Managing Disclosed Relationships

Once a relationship is disclosed, management and HR will work with the individuals to develop an appropriate management plan. Options may include:

- No action required (if no conflict exists)
- Changing reporting lines
- Removing one party from decisions affecting the other
- Transferring one party to a different team or location
- Enhanced oversight of relevant decisions

The approach will depend on the specific circumstances and aim to be fair to both parties while protecting the organisation.

9. Professional Conduct

Regardless of personal relationships, all employees must:

- Maintain professional behaviour at work
- Avoid public displays of affection in the workplace
- Not allow relationships to disrupt team dynamics
- Treat all colleagues equitably
- Keep personal disagreements separate from work
- Not use company time or resources for personal relationship matters

10. When Relationships End

If a workplace relationship ends, both parties are expected to:

- Continue to behave professionally
- Not allow the breakup to affect work performance or team dynamics

- Respect each other's boundaries
- Not discuss the relationship with colleagues inappropriately
- Seek support from HR or EAP if needed

If difficulties arise following a relationship ending, speak to your manager or HR for support.

11. Favouritism and Conflicts of Interest

[Company Name] will not tolerate favouritism arising from personal relationships. Employees in relationships must:

- Not be involved in decisions about the other's employment, pay, promotion, or performance
- Not share confidential information with their partner
- Not use their position to benefit their partner
- Declare any conflict of interest in relevant decisions

12. Relationships with External Parties

Relationships with suppliers, customers, or other external parties can create real or perceived conflicts of interest. If you are in such a relationship:

- Disclose it to your manager
- Remove yourself from decisions involving that party
- Be aware of confidentiality obligations
- Consider the impact on business relationships

13. Privacy

[Company Name] respects employees' right to privacy. We will:

- Only require disclosure where there is a legitimate business reason
- Keep disclosures confidential
- Not share information beyond those who need to know
- Not inquire into personal relationships that do not require disclosure

Employees should not feel pressured to share details of their personal lives beyond what is required by this policy.

14. Support

The following support is available:

- HR – for confidential guidance on this policy
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – for personal support
- Manager – for workplace-related concerns

15. Consequences

Breaches of this policy may result in:

- Counselling or coaching
- Formal warning
- Changes to roles or reporting lines
- Disciplinary action up to termination

Harassment or abuse related to workplace relationships will be treated as serious misconduct.

16. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.

Employee Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understood [Company Name]'s Workplace Relationships Policy. I agree to comply with the disclosure and conduct requirements set out in this policy.

Employee Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____