

	<p align="center">Conflict of Interest & Consensual Relationships</p> <p align="right"><i>Adopted on 12/2/2015</i></p>
<p align="center">Last Revision Date: 11/13/2024</p>	<p align="center">Policy No. 4.504</p>
<p align="center">Last Enabling Resolution: 240-2024/920-2024</p>	<p align="center">Developer/Reviewer: Chief Human Resources Officer</p>

1. Purpose

Sedgwick County is committed to providing a workplace that is free of actual or perceived conflicts of interest and to eliminate the risk of discriminatory harassment based on gender. The purpose of this policy is to communicate to employees that relationships between an employee and a supervisor, manager or other person with decision making authority over the conditions of employment, is strictly prohibited.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Sedgwick County employees with the exception of employees of the Sheriff’s Office and the Office of the District Attorney.

3. Policy Statement

It is the policy of Sedgwick County to prohibit intimate relationships between an employee and a supervisor, manager or any other person with decision making authority over conditions of employment. This policy provides guidance regarding relationships in the workplace, defines what is prohibited and the steps that will be taken to resolve such relationships.

4. Definitions

- A. **Conflict of Interest** – Any relationship that creates or appears to create a conflict between the employee’s personal interests and the business interests of Sedgwick County. An example is when one of the employees is in a position to recommend or decide any matter which may affect benefits, evaluations, compensation, any term or condition of employment of the other employee.

- B. **Discriminatory Harassment Based on Gender/Sexual Harassment** –
 - 1. Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions (quid pro quo).
 - 2. Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may exist irrespective of: the sexes of the harasser and the victim; and the positions (employee, supervisor, co-worker, and non-employee) of the harasser and the victim. See policy 4.506 – Workplace Discrimination for reporting and procedural information.

- C. **Intimate Relationship** – Any relationship involving emotional or physical intimacy and/or sexual contact between employees.
- D. **Prohibited Relationships** – Any intimate relationship between a supervisor or manager and a subordinate; or a relationship between an individual with employment decision making authority over the other employee.
- E. **Supervisor** – For the purpose of this policy, supervisor is defined as the immediate supervisor or any employee that is in a position to recommend or decide any matter which may affect the subordinate employee’s benefits, promotions, performance evaluations, compensation or any other term or condition of employment.

5. Procedures

- A. All intimate relationships between employees in the same Department must be reported to the Department Director or the appropriate authority in their chain of command within thirty (30) days of the start of the relationship. Failure to report consensual relationships, or resolve such a conflict of interest, may result in disciplinary action.
- B. Any supervisor receiving such a report will inform the Department Director within one (1) business day. The Department Director will contact the Chief Human Resources Officer within five (5) business days.
- C. If the determination is made that the relationship has the potential to create an actual or perceived conflict of interest, as defined above, the Department Director will review the policy with the involved employees within five (5) business days, document the date of the meeting and notify the Chief Human Resources Officer of the deadline for the parties to resolve the conflict of interest.
- D. Relationships between supervisors and subordinates are prohibited. Therefore, in these instances, the Department Director will issue a Final Written Reprimand to the supervisor involved within ten (10) calendar days of the meeting to review the policy. Depending on the circumstances, the supervisory employee may be subject to termination.
- E. The employee and supervisor must immediately cease to work together. This includes on matters or projects pending at the time the disclosure is made. The supervisor must withdraw from participation in all activities or decisions relating to the subordinate’s terms of employment. The Department Director should contact the Division of Human Resources to request that the subordinate be formally assigned to a new supervisor.
- F. Disclosure of the relationship will be treated confidentially and shared only with those who have a need to know.

- G. The employees in the relationship will have sixty (60) calendar days for one of them to obtain employment in another County Department/Division or outside of Sedgwick County.
- H. If within the sixty (60) calendar day period neither party has left the Department, the supervisor must resign or be terminated. The Department Director will have five (5) business days after the expiration of the sixty (60) day period to submit the 4.608F to the Chief Human Resources Officer.
- I. When two employees are in an intimate relationship that did not violate this policy at the time it began, but later presents a conflict of interest as a result of a job reassignment, change of responsibilities or any other change made to meet Sedgwick County business needs, the relationship must be disclosed as outlined. In these instances, the Department Director should contact the Chief Human Resources Officer within five (5) business days. The Department Director and CHRO will determine a resolution consistent with policy.
- J. When a Department Director receives a third party report of an alleged prohibited relationship, it should be reported to the Division of Human Resources immediately. Employees may also report alleged relationships directly to the Division of Human Resources. In these instances, Human Resources staff will engage in fact finding that may or may not lead to an investigation.
- K. Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.