

Town of Phillipston

Employment of Family Members

Purpose. The Town is committed to provide equal employment opportunity to all applicants for employment. This policy ensures that municipal employees' private relationships do not conflict with their public obligation to act objectively and with integrity. It is intended to minimize the potential for actual or perceived conflicts of interest which may arise when Phillipston employees or officials are in positions of unequal authority and also have a familial relationship, consensual romantic or personal relationship, and/or live together.

Definitions.

"Employee" for purposes of this policy includes elected and appointed officials, full time and part time employees, and volunteers.

"Family member" means the employee's spouse or partner, parents, grandparents, children, siblings, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, and any other person related to a town employee by blood, marriage or operation of law. Family members include step relations and in-laws.

"Related persons" means town employees who live together in the same household, regardless whether their relationship is platonic or otherwise, or who have a romantic, intimate, or sexual relationship with each other, regardless of whether they live in the same household.

"Position of unequal authority" means when one individual has the direct or indirect ability to influence the hiring, promotion, transfer, performance appraisal, benefits, schedule, assignment, compensation and/or career progress of a family member or related person; or whose employment relationship to the family member or related person creates an actual or perceived conflict of interest as determined by the Town's sole discretion.

Applicability. This policy applies to all Phillipston employees and officials whether appointed or elected, full time or part time.

Policy. The Town of Phillipston permits hiring of a current employee's family member or a related person when such person is the most qualified candidate for a position. However, in an effort to eliminate any actual or perceived conflicts of interest from arising in the workplace, Phillipston does not permit a current employee to be in a position of unequal authority over a family member or related person. Phillipston will not hire, transfer or promote any person if doing so will place a current employee in a position of unequal authority to another.

Co-Worker Relationships. Due to the potential for conflict of interest, sexual harassment and/or other serious concerns, the Town strongly discourages employees and officials from dating or entering into a consensual or romantic relationship with other employees or officials. In an effort to avoid such issues from arising the Town prohibits supervisors from having a romantic or sexual relationship with a subordinate within their department or oversight, regardless of consent.

Employees who become family members or otherwise become related persons may continue in their current positions as long as a relation of unequal authority is not created and they immediately report this relationship to their supervisor.

If a relation of unequal authority is created then the Town will work with the employees to develop an alternative arrangement which complies with Town policy. If such an arrangement cannot be achieved within 30 days, then one of the employees will be terminated.

The Town reserves the right to exercise appropriate managerial judgment to take such actions as may be necessary to achieve the intent of this policy. The Town reserves the right to vary from the guidelines outlined in this policy to address unusual circumstances on a case by case basis.

Effective Date, Grandfathering. This policy takes effect upon adoption. Current employees already in a prohibited relationship are grandfathered except where the position has job assignment, disciplinary, performance evaluation or compensation setting functions over the subordinate position.

Adopted by the Selectboard, November 5, 2018