

Effective: August 18, 2020

I. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definition applies:

Chain of Command – The order in which authority and power is wielded and delegated from top management to every employee at every level of the organization.

II. Disclosure of Family Members and Close Relationships

- A. An employee who has known family members and/or individuals with whom the employee has a close relationship working for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and who does not have a Relationship Disclosure Form on file, must notify their supervisor and submit the form to the Executive Director of Human Resources (EDHR) within 10 business days of becoming aware of this policy.
- B. If a Board of Education member or employee enters into a close relationship that would create a violation of this policy:
 - 1. Within 10 business days, both employees must notify his or her supervisor of the close relationship and submit a Relationship Disclosure Form to the Executive Director of Human Resources (EDHR).
 - 2. After a review of the case, one of the employees may be transferred to a position in the same job classification if available. The transfer will take place as soon as possible.
 - 3. If accommodations of this nature are not feasible, the employees will be permitted to determine which of them will accept a temporary position until a suitable placement is found or resign.
- C. If the disclosure of a family member or close relationship would be detrimental to an employee's well-being or that of his or her family, they should schedule a confidential consultation with the EDHR to discuss the case.

III. Reporting Suspected Violations

Employees and supervisors who suspect and/or learn of violations of Policy 7020 are to take the appropriate actions:

- A. Employees who suspect and/or learn of violations of Policy 7020 are expected to confidentially consult with his or her supervisor.
- B. Supervisors who suspect and/or learn of violations of Policy 7020 will ensure the Relationship Disclosure Form is completed by the employee and submitted to the EDHR within 10 business days of becoming aware of the relationship. If the employee fails to comply with written direction to submit the Relationship Disclosure Form, the supervisor will notify the OHR for immediate action.

IV. Hiring/Promoting/Transferring Family Members and Individuals in Close Relationships

- A. Family members of employees and individuals with whom they have a close relationship who are currently working for HCPSS may be hired, promoted, or transferred if:
 - 1. They are the best qualified or only candidate for a position in a critical shortage area; and
 - 2. They will not be supervising or working under the supervision of a family member.
- B. If no other placement options are available and if the candidate is the best choice for a given position based on merit, a request for an exception must be made in writing to the EDHR. The EDHR, in conjunction with the highest ranking executive of the hiring division, will evaluate the request and issue a written response.
- C. The number of Relationship Disclosure Forms received from July 1 through June 30th will be reported to the Board of Education on an annual basis.

V. Supervising and Monitoring Employees Who are Family Members and Those With Whom the Employee has a Close Relationship

The following guidelines will apply when managing or monitoring the employment relationship of family members or an individual with whom the employee has a close relationship within the same school, division, department or office. These guidelines apply to an employee who would, under normal circumstances, be in the chain of command of a supervisor who happens to be a family member:

- A. Reporting Structure
 - 1. An employee will not be under the direct or indirect supervision or control of a family member or an individual with whom the employee has a close relationship.

2. Although the employee works in the division that is managed by a family member or an individual with whom the employee has a close relationship, the employee will report to a higher level supervisor who is able to supervise and evaluate the employee's day-to-day responsibilities. For example, if the family members are a Community Superintendent and principal, the principal will report to the Chief of School Management and Instructional Leadership.

B. Supervisor Responsibilities

The employee's supervisor will make all decisions regarding salary, performance evaluations, job assignment changes, work-related travel, and time-off.

C. Monitoring

1. The OHR will solicit annually, an evaluation conducted by the employee's supervisor of the team's working environment when two or more individuals who are related work in the same school, division, department or office.
2. An evaluation may be initiated prior to the annual review as deemed necessary by the OHR.

VI. Guidelines for Contracted Services

- A. Agencies who are Board-approved must require individuals who are being recommended to augment HCPSS employees to complete the Relationship Disclosure Form.
- B. The agency will forward the completed Relationship Disclosure Form to the EDHR prior to placement of the individual.
- C. HCPSS hiring supervisors are responsible for notifying the OHR of all individuals who are sourced through a contracted service provider if they will be working in any HCPSS building in any capacity for greater than five (5) consecutive days.

VII. Monitoring

Policy 7020 implementation procedures will be overseen by the Division of Human Resources and Professional Development.

VIII. History¹

ADOPTED: December 5, 2019
REVIEWED:
MODIFIED: August 18, 2020
REVISED:
EFFECTIVE: August 18, 2020

¹ Key: *Adopted*-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; *Reviewed*-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; *Modified*-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; *Revised*-The date the Board took action on a that policy based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; *Effective*-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.