

**MARION COUNTY
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Sponsoring Department/Division:
Business Services/Human Resources

SUBJECT: NEPOTISM

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to address favoritism, bias, conflict of interest, and liability from harassment situations and inappropriate conduct caused by a family or close personal relationships between supervisory or employees with oversight authority of a subordinate employee.

All employees have the right to expect fair and impartial treatment from supervisors or employees with oversight authority. A familial, close personal, or financial relationship between a supervisor or oversight authority employee with an employee whom they have direct influence over exposes them to possible charges of conflict of interest, favoritism, bias, and inappropriate conduct that may adversely impact the performance of business functions or the working environment.

In the public sector, it is essential to avoid situations, which may lead to any favoritism, bias, conflict of interest or inappropriate conduct. County employees have been entrusted with carrying out the public interest and performing their work in a manner consistent with the highest professional and ethical standards.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

Nepotism – favoritism or bias shown by those acting in the capacity of a supervisor or by persons with oversight authority to family members or someone with whom they have a close personal or financial relationship.

Family member - wife, husband, domestic partner, son, daughter, mother, father, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, stepparent, or stepchild, grandparent, grandchild, and includes *in loco parentis* relationships.

In loco parentis - relationships that involve the day-to-day responsibilities to care for, house or provide financial support to a child. A biological or legal relationship is not necessary. The continuing relationship between the parties after the child reaches the age of majority constitutes an *in loco parentis* relationship.

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Close Personal Relationship - relationships between persons who reside in the same household or have a romantic relationship or a relationship that has the effect of influencing judgment or employment actions of either party to the relationship.

Financial Relationship – any financial relationship that could influence preferential treatment in the work place.

Supervisory or oversight authority - when one employee has direct influence on decisions concerning selection and hiring, which includes making recommendations for hiring, assignment or review of work, providing input on employee performance evaluations, transfer, promotion, grievance review, or other terms and conditions of employment over another employee. This includes supervisors and lead workers.

3.0 POLICY

All employees shall avoid being in a position where they are subject to supervisory or oversight authority by a family member or a person with whom they have a close personal or financial relationship. Employees who become family members or establish a close personal or financial relationship with other employees may continue employment as long as the relationship does not result in nepotism due to supervisory or oversight authority between the two positions.

Provided no nepotism exists, nothing in this policy is intended to prevent family members or individuals in close personal or financial relationships from being employed by Marion County.

4.0 POLICY GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

1. Whenever possible, nepotism situations shall be prevented from occurring at the time of appointment, transfer, promotion, evaluation or grievance review.
2. When potential nepotistic situations arise as a result of organizational restructure, marriage or development of a close personal or financial relationship, the employees involved have an obligation to immediately inform their department head or manager.
3. In a self-reported nepotistic situation, the employees and the County will jointly make a good faith effort to find an alternative assignment for one of the two employees. Depending on business need, this may include, but is not limited to restructuring duties, assignment to another position, assignment to another shift or change in supervision.

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4. If no alternative assignment is available within 60 days, it will be necessary for one of the employees to resign. In the event that neither employee is willing to resign, the less senior employee will be laid off.
5. Policy violations including, but not limited to, failure to disclose nepotistic relationships will be investigated by the department head or department manager in consultation with Human Resources. Policy violations may result in progressive discipline of employees up to and including termination of employment. Supervisors and lead workers may be disciplined for taking employment actions based upon nepotistic relationships. An alternative assignment for one of the two employees may also be required.

Adopted: 11/05