

2014-
2015

Code of Conduct-Student
Intervention and Prevention:
A Guide for Parents and Families

Office for Student Development
Harford Community College

WELCOME

Family support and involvement are essential factors for helping students achieve their academic and career goals. As parents you have invested a tremendous amount of time, energy and resources in getting your student to college. Yet despite all the love and careful planning, you may find yourself unprepared for the issues that may prevent your student from succeeding. One important step you as a parent or family member can take is to recommend that your student know his/her rights and responsibilities as an HCC student by reading the *Code for Student Rights, Responsibilities & Conduct* and to become familiar with our Student Intervention and Prevention process.

Adjusting to college life often means dealing with many things for the first time, such as handling finances, working, interacting with people from other cultures with other beliefs, and trying out romantic partnerships. This is in addition to new academic demands, such as learning how to study effectively, getting work done on time, and navigating all the procedures of a the college. Once at college, your student will discover first-hand that college work is not just greater in volume than high school work; it's more intellectually demanding. Doing more work, more independently is stressful. Help your student think carefully about his/her academic course load. Even if your student was in the top of his/her class in high school, college courses are more challenging and occur in the context of a variety of other new pressures and experiences.



Talk together about your student's academic priorities, study environment, and healthy ways of reducing stress through exercise or relaxation techniques. Discuss ways to determine how your student is coping. If the demands are so great that your student needs additional support, encourage him/her to form study groups with other students, ~~or~~ seek out advisors and mentors, or ~~help~~ access assistance from the ~~Tutoring Center~~ Learning Center. Academic adjustment takes time but most students will succeed with the right resources and support system.

Formatted: Strikethrough

Formatted: Strikethrough

Formatted: Strikethrough



COLLEGE CAN BE STRESSFUL

All students will experience some level of stress during their daily lives. Some students may face life events that are more challenging such as significant changes in a relationship, the death of someone close, family crises, or physical illness. Others will face severe difficulty with anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, anger, addictions and even psychotic episodes. How your student responds to these challenges and how these challenges impact his/her academic functioning

will vary greatly based on his/her coping abilities and personal situations.

Fortunately, it's possible to manage and maintain stress at relatively healthy levels. While some sources of stress cannot be avoided, others can be prevented or diminished. Discuss with your student how to tell the difference so that unnecessary stressors can be minimized. You can help by acknowledging signs of stress in your student, understanding the causes, and helping him/her determine the best course of action to reduce or redirect it.

Having a bad day is normal. It happens to everyone. Having a string of bad days in which one can't sleep, eat, keep up with school work, or find enjoyment could be a sign of a larger problem. If you sense your student is struggling, let him/her know you are interested and concerned about his/her welfare. Ask your student if ~~he~~/she/~~he~~ knows what could be contributing to his/her problems. The goal is not to pry into your student's personal life but to confront his/her difficulties in a constructive fashion and encourage him/her to take appropriate action.

STUDENT INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

To provide assistance to your student when exhibiting concerning, distressful, disruptive, and/or threatening behavior we have put together a Student Intervention and Prevention Team. SIP Team members are hand-picked campus employees who, through their professional skill set, are capable of providing assistance to your student when in need. Referrals to the SIP Team can be made by faculty or staff, another student, or your student can identify to us directly.

Once the SIP Team gets the referral we will begin intervention strategies. The SIP Team and your student will jointly determine the nature of the problem for which assistance is needed, followed by development of a plan of action that often includes referrals. This

process requires an extensive knowledge base on the part of the SIP Team regarding the array of services available on campus and in the community. Our intervention and referrals, to needed support persons and services, is a way of communicating to your student that we at the College care.

Asking for Help

If you notice significant changes in your student's personality, don't discount them as mere growing pains. Feeling sad, lonely, overly excited or anxious can be part of the natural transition. They can also be signs that need attention. If your student is open to talking to you, listen attentively, show genuine concern and try to avoid judgmental responses. If your student is reluctant to talk, or dismisses your concerns, acknowledge his/her comments while also making the point that help is available: "I am glad you feel that you have the situation under control. Sometimes, however, things pile up and seem pretty overwhelming. It can be a tremendous relief to have an objective person help you sort out your problems. HCC has a Student Intervention and Prevention Team, located in the Student Center, Room 265, which can give you resources and referrals that may be helpful to you."

Getting Help to a Friend

Make sure your student is familiar with the signs that a friend needs help dealing with emotional issues or has a mental health problem. Signs of depression or apathy, severe anxiety or stress, increased use of alcohol or drugs, or compulsive behavior should be taken seriously. They should emphasize that reaching out for support is the first step to feeling better and is a sign of courage, not weakness.



It is important for your student to remember that [he/shes/he](#) is not a therapist. His/her role is to be supportive and encourage help seeking. [He/sheS/he](#) should not ignore the problem, enable the friend by covering up, or participate with the friend in behaviors that are concerning.

If your student would like to identify another student in need of assistance, [he/shes/he](#) is encouraged to use the *Report Form for Concerning Behavior*. This form allows the campus community to communicate with the SIP Team and make the SIP Team aware of any

concerns or suspicions your student may have about a particular individual's behavior. We recommend your student report any threats and any other behavior that is troubling or upsetting. There is no penalty for reporting. In fact, the SIP Team wants to hear about behavior that causes anyone some worry or concern. Follow these steps:

Log onto OwlNet » Click on My Academic Life tab » Scroll down to the Rights and Responsibilities channel » Click on Report Form for Concerning Behavior » Follow the instructions and complete the report form » Type in the displayed Security Word » Click Submit Report

Concerning Behavior

As a parent or family member you may be the first to recognize when your student is behaving in a manner that elicits concern. By encouraging your student to seek services from the Student Intervention and Prevention office you play an important role in getting help for your student. Attending to the concerns of your student and providing information about campus resources can be an important intervention, which may prevent escalation of the problem or situation. Examples of Concerning Behavior:

- Irritability
- Unruly Behavior
- Tearfulness
- Anxiety and Panic
- Talking of Suicide
- Emotionally troubled (i.e., confusion, sadness, anxiety, irritability)
- Lack of concentration or motivation
- Expressing inappropriate anger or aggression
- Exhibiting bizarre or unusual behavior

Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior is behavior that interferes with or interrupts the educational process of other students or the normal operations of the College. It is expected that your student, as a student, will experience a wide range of emotions. However, when he/she/he comes to campus under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, expresses extreme anger or becomes disruptive, it is distracting to the learning environment. Anger itself is not a violation of the Student Code of Conduct nor is it necessarily a threat to classroom order. However, when that anger manifests itself into disregard for College authority or disorderly conduct, such behavior will be reported to the Office for Student Development and/or the Department of Public Safety. Examples of Disruptive Behavior:

- Verbally abusing or intimidating another
- Overly demanding of faculty or staff
- Behavior that is distracting to the learning environment (i.e., talking, texting, or sleeping)

Threatening Behavior

This is a mental health emergency where there is a life threatening situation in which an individual is imminently threatening harm to self or others, severely disoriented or out of touch with reality, has a severe inability to function, or is otherwise distraught and out of control. This type of aggressive behavior varies from threats to verbal abuse to physical violence. It is very difficult to predict aggression and violence; however, the following can be indicators or “Red Flags” of potential violence:

- At risk of harming self or others
- Suicidal or self-injurious
- Homicidal

THE CARE TEAM

The Care Team serves as the group on campus that reviews, reports and monitors individual students to insure compliance with action plans with the intent to diffuse situations and discuss threats to the campus community. The primary purpose of a direct threat assessment is to prevent targeted violence. The threat assessment process is centered upon analysis of the facts and evidence of behavior in a given situation. The appraisal of risk in a threat assessment focuses on actions, communications, and specific circumstances that might suggest that an individual intends to mount an attack and is engaged in planning or preparing for that event. Our Care Team seeks to thoroughly evaluate persons of concern, who may pose a potential risk of violence by generally engaging in a three-step process:

- Identify individuals, whose behavior causes concern or disruption on-or-off campus, potentially impacting the College community members such as students, faculty, or other staff.
- Assess whether the identified individual possesses the intent and ability to carry out an attack against the College community, and if the individual has taken any steps to prepare for the attack.
- Manage the threat posed by the individual, disrupt potential plans of attack, mitigate the risk, and implement strategies to facilitate long-term resolution.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

HCC's *Code for Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct* is designed to provide educational guidance to assist in developing good citizens and to respond appropriately to behavior that interferes with the learning environment of the college. We recognize that you are a critical factor in the success of your student and you have a large role in preparing them to make responsible choices. Often, students make choices without

thinking how these choices will affect them later. While you may not be able to actively monitor every move of your student, you can be available to talk and listen.

Confidentiality

All education records of current and former HCC students will be maintained in accordance with the Family Educational and Privacy Act (FERPA). If your student has informed you that he or she is involved in our disciplinary process we encourage you to discuss the situation with your student prior to making contact with our office. In most cases, the Office for Student Development cannot discuss student issues related to disciplinary situations, conflicts, and grievances without explicit written consent from the student. Our policy is to communicate directly with students on all disciplinary matters. Our offices will normally only share specific case information when a student has signed a ~~Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)~~ form. Even in these instances, we will continue to communicate directly with the student while also providing information to you, the parent(s). We encourage you to provide important moral support and to assist your student in understanding both the disciplinary process and the expectations of the College.

Formatted: Strikethrough

Student Code Procedures *(In cases involving Title IX or other discrimination allegations, the Title IX Coordinator and/or the Director of Human Resources and Employee Development will be part of the investigation and decision making process.)*

Comment [t1]: I did a cut and paste from the most recent code revisions for this section on Student Code Procedures

- A. Filing a Complaint:** Any member of the College community may file a complaint against any student for violation of the Student Code. The complaint should be filed online via the *Report Form for Code of Conduct Violation* on OwlNet as soon as possible after the event, preferably within ten (10) work days of the incident giving rise to the Complaint. Anonymous complaints will not be processed. The Complainant is encouraged to submit any supporting documentation as an attachment to the online *Report Form for Code of Conduct Violation*.
- B. Investigation:** The Student Conduct Official (SCO) will investigate the allegations through interviews and documentation, including examination by HCC's IT department of digital information provided to him/her, in order to determine if there is a reasonable basis to believe that a violation may have occurred. If there is no basis for the Complaint, it will be dismissed. If the case is not dismissed, then the SCO will proceed with an Administrative Conference.
- C. Notification:** If after an investigation the SCO, based on reasonably reliable information, believes the Student may have violated one or more provisions of the Student Code, the SCO shall issue written notice to the Student. The notice will be sent to the Student via his/her College email account, via a personal email address provided to the College, or via certified mail to his/her address of record when necessary. Students are expected to check their email/mail on a frequent and consistent basis as certain communications from the College may be time critical. Failing to read your email or mail does not negate your responsibility. Notice will be

provided at least two (2) work days prior to the Administrative Conference. The notice will describe the alleged violation(s), directions for the Student to schedule a meeting, and consequences for failing to respond to the notice.

D. Administrative Conference: The SCO, who may be assisted by another College official, shall conduct an Administrative Conference with the Respondent. This conference is the opportunity to review the alleged violation(s) and evidence against the Respondent, provide an explanation of the disciplinary process, review the Respondent's history at the College, review the Respondent's account of the situation and any relevant facts, and discuss the options for resolution.

E. Failure to Comply: Failure to attend the Administrative Conference will result in an additional violation (i.e., failure to comply with directions of College officials acting in performance of their duties), and/or may result in a decision about the Complaint and sanction without the Respondent's input, and/or a dean's hold will be placed on the Respondent's account. The dean's hold will prevent the Respondent from further records and registration transactions with the College. A Respondent who has been charged with an alleged violation(s) and who withdraws from the College or stops attending before the disciplinary process is completed will be required to complete the disciplinary process upon re-enrollment to the College or before obtaining any education records, including transcripts.

F. Violation of Law

1. The Department of Public Safety may charge or arrest students and/or report possible violations of the law (including, but not limited to, violence or threats of violence) to appropriate legal authorities. The College may advise off-campus authorities of the existence of the Student Code and how such matters will be handled internally within the College community. The College will cooperate fully with law enforcement authorities and other agencies in the enforcement of civil or criminal law on campus and in the conditions imposed by criminal courts for the rehabilitation of student violators.
2. College disciplinary proceedings may be instituted against a student charged with violation of any federal, state, or local law which is also a violation of this Student Code. Proceedings under this Student Code may be carried out prior to, simultaneously with, or following civil or criminal proceedings on- or off-campus. The outcome of the criminal proceedings will have no bearing on the HCC disciplinary proceedings.
3. If a student is arrested for committing or threatening to commit an act of violence, he/shes/he will immediately be placed on Interim Suspension.

G. Decision: In cases where the SCO determines that the Respondent did not violate the Student Code, the Respondent will receive written notice that he/shes/he is found not responsible, no further action is needed, and no official disciplinary file will be maintained. In cases where the SCO determines that it is more likely than not that the Respondent did violate the Student Code, s/he will also decide the

appropriate sanction. The severity of the violation, prior disciplinary history, and other relevant circumstances will be considered in determining the appropriate resolution. If it is determined that the Respondent is responsible for the violation, the SCO will notify the Respondent in writing. In cases involving allegations of discrimination or Title IX violations, the Director of Human Resources and Employee Development and/or Title IX Coordinator will be part of the decision making process.

In cases where the SCO determines that the sanction for the violation may be suspension, expulsion, revocation of admission, credit, or degree, or withholding a degree, the SCO will refer the case to the SCRB for review and action. The SCRB shall be composed of three (3) voting members to include: the Director for Human Resources and Employee Development, or designee; the Director for Financial Aid, or designee; and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, or designee. If the SCRB determines that the Respondent did violate the Student Code, it will recommend a sanction(s) to the SCO, whose decision is final. If it is determined that the Respondent is responsible for the violation, then the SCO will notify the Respondent in writing.

College Process vs. Criminal Charge

Rules governing the handling of student conduct matters at colleges are different from criminal statutes. Criminal prosecutions take place only when violations of law are alleged. Here at HCC, there are many types of violations that may not be violations of the law, but violate college standards of behavior. Another difference is that the process at HCC is an administrative conference and not a trial, and as such is not adversarial in nature. Therefore, our process will not have the same procedures as a criminal trial. In addition, there is a difference between the campus process and the criminal process in the standard of proof. At HCC, there must be a preponderance of the information, more likely than not, for a student to be found responsible for violating the student code of conduct.

Most importantly, the student conduct process is considered an educational tool; the sanctions imposed focus on repairing harm to the community, to victims, and to the College as a whole. Sanctions also take into account what the accused student needs to learn from the situation. The process focuses on helping your student understand why his/her behaviors violated community standards and how your student can avoid making the same mistake again. It is also focused on helping the student see how the instances of misconduct affect others.

We hope this guide has been a useful tool to begin to orient you to our Student Intervention and Prevention process, Care team, and Student Code of Conduct process.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Diane Resides, D.Ed.
Associate Vice President for Student Development
443-412-2142
dresides@harford.edu

Nicole Hoke Wilson, M.A.
Director for Disability and Student Intervention Services
443-412-2132
nhokewilson@harford.edu

Kim Ashman, M.S.
Student Conduct and Intervention Specialist
443-412-2073
kashman@harford.edu

RESOURCES

This document is adapted from a collective set of works and publications

Disciplinary Guide for Parents. Capital University, Office of Judicial Affairs
<http://www.capital.edu/uploadedFiles/Disciplinary%20Guide%20For%20Parents.pdf>

Emotional Health & Your College Student, A Guide for Parents. www.Transitionyear.org

Fein, R., Vossekuil, B., R., Pollack, W.S., Modzeleski, W. and Reddy, M (2002) Threat Assessment Schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates. Washington, DS: US Secret Service and US Department of Education.

The Student Conduct Process: A Guide for Parents. A publication of the Association for Student Conduct Administration. Morehouse College.
[http://www.morehouse.edu/campus life/student conduct/pdf/Student-Conduct-Process-0811.pdf](http://www.morehouse.edu/campus%20life/student%20conduct/pdf/Student-Conduct-Process-0811.pdf)