



# Frederick Community College Procedure

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Classroom Behavior	Policy Number	5.17
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## A. Introduction

Instructors have the right and responsibility to maintain an environment conducive to learning where discussion and expression of all views relevant to the subject matter of the class are recognized as necessary to the educational process. Disruptive students in the academic setting hinder the educational process. Accordingly, instructors should establish, communicate and enforce reasonable rules of class behavior and decorum via the syllabus and class discussion.

Recognizing that learning takes place in areas other than traditional classrooms, the Classroom Behavior Policy and Procedures apply to learning environments, including but not limited to, clinical sites, field trips, library visits, off-site facilities, online learning environments and Continuing Education courses (with the exception of courses specifically designated for younger ages such as Kids on Campus and Home School Enrichment courses, which have specific procedures for addressing classroom behavioral issues). Copies of the College's Classroom Behavior Policy and Procedures will be posted in learning environments including the Writing Center, Library, Math Learning Center, Computer Labs, Blackboard, etc.

Civil expression of disagreement with the instructor or other students during times when the instructor permits discussion is not in itself disruptive behavior and should not be prohibited.

## B. Preventive Measures

Instructors who have concerns about student's behavior should consult with a member of Student Development. This consultation is intended to provide the instructor with resources to address the behavior before it escalates to the point of requiring intervention.

Behavior Evaluation and Response Team – Instructors who have concerns about student behavior which, while not considered to be a violation of this procedure, warrants evaluation, can make a referral to the Behavior Evaluation and Response Team (BERT). The BERT team functions as a consultative resource for faculty,

intended to ensure an opportunity to evaluate problematic behavior and develop a response designed to prevent escalation (Procedure 5.1 1b).

### C. Disruptive or Threatening Behavior

1. Disruptive behavior means conduct that substantially interferes with or obstructs the teaching or learning process in the context of a classroom or educational setting. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - a. Inappropriate use of electronic devices including cell phones, video players, tape players, laptops, etc.
  - b. Inappropriate comments or personal insults, conveyed orally or in writing, including communications within e-mails, and online course venues.
  - c. Persistent speaking without being recognized or interrupting other speakers.
  - d. Behavior that distracts the class, such as sleeping, holding private conversations, frequent leaving/entering the classroom, etc.
  - e. Conduct that distracts or intimidates others in a manner that interferes with instructional activities.
  - f. Refusal to comply with instructor's directions.
2. Threatening behavior is defined as any statement or communication - including those in written form, conduct or gesture - directed toward any member of the College community that causes reasonable apprehension of physical harm to a person or property. Threatening behavior can be explicit or implicit. An implicit threat may also include behaviors that make one feel uncomfortable, like invading another's personal space or using techniques of behavioral intimidation, such as yelling or using aggressive gestures. The threatening behavior does not have to be directly observed or received by the person who is the object of the threat, so long as a reasonable person would interpret the statement, communication, conduct, or gesture as an expression of intent to harm.
3. Students who may have a disorder that manifest itself in disruptive behaviors, while considered disabled and protected under the Rehabilitation Act of 1994/ADA, are still held to the same standards of conduct as any student.

### D. Responding to Disruptive or Threatening Behavior

Recognizing that disruptive behavior often involves a continuum of behavior, the College has developed both informal and formal responses to address disruptive class behavior. Whenever possible, attempts should be made to resolve the situation through the informal process.

As this procedure extends beyond the traditional classroom to all forms of learning environments including online environments, references to suspending a student from a class on an interim basis or for the duration of the semester apply to online students as well. Students who are suspended from an online class on an interim basis will have their access to that particular online course blocked for the duration of the suspension; they will however, retain access to any other online course in which they are registered. Students who are suspended from an online class for the duration of the semester will be administratively withdrawn from the class and their access to that course blocked.

Response to disruptive behavior involves progressive sanctions ranging from verbal warnings to referral for action under the College's Code of Student Conduct commensurate with the nature, severity, and frequency of violations. However, involuntary suspension from the classroom for more than one class period, involuntary withdrawal from the class, or more serious sanctions require that the disciplinary procedures set forth in D. 2. below be followed.

#### 1. Informal Resolution

Informal resolution is intended to provide recourse for an instructor to address disruptive behavior with the goal of providing the student the opportunity to modify the behavior to conform to the behavioral standards established by the instructor as necessary to remain in the class.

- a. If a student's behavior, in the judgment of the instructor, willfully disrupts the teaching and learning process, the instructor should issue a warning, explaining that such behavior is unacceptable, instructing the student on the behavior that is required in the future and describing the consequences if the behavior does not cease.
- b. If necessary, the student may be asked to leave the class for the remainder of the class time, or in the case of an online student, suspended from the class until a meeting between the instructor and student is held. If the student does not do so willingly, the instructor will request the assistance of the Frederick Community College Security Office. The instructor should inform his/her Department Chair.
- c. In instances where a student has been asked to leave the class or suspended from an online course, the instructor and student must meet prior to the next scheduled class, or as soon as possible in the case of an online student, to resolve the issue and review class expectations in order to be reinstated in the class. At this meeting, the instructor will inform the student of the unacceptable behavior, instruct the student on the behavior that is required in the future, and describe the consequences if the behavior does not cease. Consequences can include referral for formal resolution. The instructor or student may wish to request that a member of the Student Development staff participate in this meeting.

- d. Should the student refuse to meet with the instructor, the instructor will complete a Disruptive Classroom Behavior Report and the case will be referred for resolution under the Formal Resolution procedures.

## 2. Formal Resolution

Formal resolution provides recourse for those situations involving: a) behavior which represents a potential threat to the safety and/or security of the faculty and/or students, b) disruptive behavior that continues after an attempt to resolve the situation through informal resolution has failed, or c) a student's refusal to comply with an instructor's attempt to resolve the situation informally.

- a. The instructor must submit a Disruptive Classroom Behavior Report to the Vice President of Learning Support through the College Security Office. The report should include any documentation related to prior incidents and the names of any witnesses.
- b. Upon receipt of a Disruptive Classroom Behavior Report, the Vice President of Learning Support or his/her designee will schedule a meeting with the student, the instructor, the Department Chair, and in the case of an online class, the Director of Distance Learning. Whenever possible, this meeting will be scheduled prior to the next scheduled class session or as soon as possible in the case of an online student. In the event that an online instructor or student does not reside locally, the meeting may involve remote participation.
- c. At that meeting, the Vice President of Learning Support may 1) require the student to provide some oral or written assurance that there will be no further incidents of disruptive behavior as a condition for reinstatement to the class, 2) apply an interim suspension and suspend the student from the class as an interim measure until any stipulated conditions are met, 3) recommend an Administrative Withdrawal (Procedure 5.11c), or 4) apply a disciplinary sanction in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct (Procedure 5.11a).
- d. If, in the finding of the Vice President for Learning Support, a resolution is unable to be reached that allows for the immediate reinstatement of the student to the class, the Vice President of Learning Support will apply an interim suspension from the class pending an administrative hearing. The Vice President of Learning Support will schedule the administrative hearing with the student, the instructor, the Vice President of Learning Support and the Vice President of Learning within five calendar days of the initial meeting with the student, instructor and Department Chair. The Vice President of Learning will make a determination regarding the student's suspension from the class for the duration of the semester.
- e. Following an administrative hearing, where there is sufficient evidence to support the suspension from the class for the duration of the semester, the Vice President of Learning Support will inform the student of the suspension in writing within five calendar days after meeting with the

student. A student who has been suspended from a class for the duration of the semester is entitled to a formal hearing before the College's Student Disciplinary Committee. The request for a hearing must be made within five calendar days of receiving the written notice of suspension from the class by the Vice President of Learning Support. Failure to file a request for a formal hearing within the specified time presumes the student's acceptance of the suspension and constitutes a waiver of his/her right to further appeal.

#### E. Appeal

A request for an appeal of any disciplinary sanction or suspension from the class for the duration of the semester will follow the process outlined under Sections M, N, and P of the Code of Student Conduct (Procedure 5.11a). In cases of an appeal of a suspension from the class for the duration of the semester, the suspension from the class will stand pending the outcome of the appeal hearing. The student remains responsible for all registered course assignments during the appeal process.

#### F. Interim Suspension from the Class

1. If the Vice President of Learning Support or his/her designee, after conferring with the instructor and Department Chair, determines that a student's behavior in the class seriously compromises the safety and security of the learning environment, a student may be suspended from the class as an interim measure.
2. The interim suspension may be issued: a) upon receipt of a Disruptive Classroom Behavior Report, pending a meeting with the student, instructor, Department Chair, and Vice President of Learning Support or his/her designee; b) pending an administrative hearing between the student, instructor, Vice President of Learning Support and Vice President of Learning in cases where a meeting with the student, instructor, Department Chair and Vice President of Learning Support did not result in a resolution that allowed for the immediate reinstatement of the student to the class.
3. A student who is subject to interim suspension from the class will be notified in writing by the Vice President of Learning Support within twenty-four hours of the student's interim suspension from the class. The student has the right to have his/her case heard expeditiously to present his/her side of the story.

#### G. Records

Disciplinary action resulting from the imposition of a written disciplinary sanction by the Vice President for Learning Support will result in the establishment of a disciplinary file in the name of the accused student. Files will be kept in accordance with the records retention process outlined in Section R of the Code of Student Conduct (Procedure 5.11a).