

A Faculty and Staff Guide to Managing Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom

Do you have students in class who do the following:

- IM (Instant Message) friends or talk on cell phones?
- Sidebar conversation with classmates?
- Interrupt discussions or make inappropriate remarks?
- Write or mention ideas that cause concern for their mental state?
- Repeatedly arrive late or leave early?

If you consider any of these behaviors disruptive, you have the right to address such behavior. Annoying classroom behavior should not be tolerated and may become disruptive if it is ignored.

Preventive Measures Faculty Can Take

- Utilize your syllabus to include specific expectations for, and consequences of student behavior (e.g., no cell phones, no tardiness, etc.) during first day introduction and in your course format.
- Use the first class meeting to review what is and isn't appropriate.
- Confer with your colleagues on ways they prevent or respond to disruptive behavior.
- Model the behavior you expect of students.
- Become familiar with the *Faculty and Staff Guide* and consult the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

Steps for Responding to Disruptive Behavior

- Immediately ask the student to stop the behavior in an appropriate manner.
- Speak with the student privately after class about his/her conduct.
- Document in writing the situation and your actions to your Academic Dean and consult with the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

When you talk privately with the student, it is your judgment whether to have a colleague or Academic Dean present during this conversation

- Be specific about the behavior that is disruptive.
- Explain the affect the behavior has on your ability to teach and the classes ability to learn.
- Address what you observe about the behavior, e.g., communicate your concern.
- Allow the student to respond and listen carefully to his or her words.
- Restate your expectations for the student's future behavior.

If Disruptive Behavior Continues

If you suspect the disruptive behavior could be the result of psychological problems, contact the University Health and Counseling Services (UH&CS) for advice on how to respond and see the *Faculty and Staff Guide to Encountering Students in Distress or Personal Crisis*.

If you suspect the disruptive behavior could be the result of the student's disability, contact Disability Resources for advice on how to respond and see the *Faculty and Staff Guide to Encountering Students in Distress or Personal Crisis*.

Some disruptive behavior simply reflects bad manners and a lack of consideration of others and may cease after one warning. If such conduct persists, in a future class, inform the student you will report the behavior to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Behaving in disruptive ways in class and failing to comply with directions to stop are both violations of the student conduct policy. Again inform your Academic Dean and the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

Your Rights as a Faculty Member

You have the right to direct students to cease disruptive classroom behavior immediately. If it becomes necessary, you can direct a student to leave your classroom for the rest of the class period. If they fail to comply with your directives to leave the classroom, promptly report their failure to do so to CWRU Security, and ask to remove the student from your classroom. Depending on the severity of the situation, an option may be to dismiss the class.

Threatening or Alarming Behavior

Sometimes behavior is more than just thoughtless or rude.

Signs of threatening/alarming behaviors include:

- Using derogatory or profane language in an angry manner.
- Appearing hostile, aggressive, or violent.
- Escalating behavior (e.g., louder voice, faster speech, pacing).
- Making statements such as "If I don't pass this course, someone will pay," "I better graduate or else," "I will take things into my own hands."
- Speaking incoherently with unconnected thoughts, garbled speech, or appearing to be under the influence.

If the student's behavior is alarming, escalating, or if you or others feel threatened:

- Contact the CWRU Police immediately, identify yourself and your location, describe the behavior, and request assistance.
- Consider dismissing the class immediately.
- Inform your Academic Dean and Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, or Office of Student Affairs.



A Faculty and Staff Guide to Call for Help

Division of Student Affairs

University Office of Student Affairs
students.case.edu/departments/office
216.368.2020

Dean of Students
students.case.edu/departments/dean
216.368.1527

Center for Civic Engagement and Learning
students.case.edu/departments/civicingagement
216.368.6960

Graduate Student Life
students.case.edu/graduate
216.368.4820

Flora Stone Mather Center for Women
case.edu/provost/centerforwomen
216.368.0977

LGBT Center
case.edu/lgbt
216.368.1237

Accommodated Testing and Services
students.case.edu/departments/education
216.368.5230

Greek Life
students.case.edu/departments/greek
216.368.3954

Multicultural Affairs
students.case.edu/departments/oma/
216.368.2904

Physical Education and Athletics
athletics.case.edu
216.368.2420

Residence Life
students.case.edu/departments/residencelife
216.368.6325

Student Conduct and Community Standards
students.case.edu/departments/conduct
216.368.3170

Student Activities and Leadership
students.case.edu/departments/activities
216.368.2670

Thwing Center
students.case.edu/departments/thwing
216.368.2660

Title IX
students.case.edu/departments/titleix
216.368.3066

University Health & Counseling Services
Counseling Services
students.case.edu/departments/counseling
216.368.8672

Health Services
students.case.edu/departments/health
216.368.2450

Urgent and Emergency Situations

Urgent Counseling & Referral Care: 216.368.5872
Urgent Counseling Care for emergency situations is available without an appointment Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in 220 Sears Building. A counselor will be available to speak with individual(s) in-person or by phone to assist them with their urgent counseling needs.

Emergencies After Hours, Weekends, and Holidays

In the event of a life-threatening emergency after hours, on weekends, or during holidays contact:

CWRU Police: 216.368.3333
Counselor-On-Call: 216.368.5872, then select Emergency Care

Other Campus Resources

Campus Clergy
students.case.edu/diversity/resources/irc.html
216.421.9614 or Hillel at 216.231.0040

CWRU Police & Security (24/7)
police.case.edu
216.368.3300

Equal Opportunity & Diversity Manager
case.edu/diversity
216.368.5371

Faculty Diversity Officer
case.edu/diversity
216.368.8877, Extension 3

Graduate Studies
gradstudies.case.edu
216.369.4390

International Student Services
students.case.edu/international
216.368.2517

Post-Graduate Planning
case.edu/studentsuccess/post-grad-planning
216.368.4446

Student Advancement
case.edu/studentsuccess

Survivors and Friends Empowerment (SAFE) Line
216.368.7777

Undergraduate Studies
case.edu/ugstudies
216.368.2928

Student Advocate
216.368.8639

