

# Teacher-Learner Relationship

## **Expectations of Teachers and Students in the Teacher-Learner Relationship to foster the Learning Climate of the CWRU School of Medicine**

An underlying principle of the medical school is that students and teachers will work together as partners to ensure that students achieve their fullest potential and succeed in the educational program.

### **RESPECT**

Teachers— faculty, residents, fellows, near-peer teachers, and other health care and research professionals— are committed to treating our students as our professional colleagues who will exercise privileges and responsibilities throughout their education.

Students and teachers will demonstrate respect for others by upholding a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning, interacting in a considerate and cooperative manner with other students and teachers, judging colleagues fairly, and attempting to resolve conflicts respectfully.

Students and teachers will neither practice nor tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, religion, age, sex, color, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, status as a disabled veteran or other protected veteran under US federal law, or socioeconomic status.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

Students and teachers will demonstrate responsibility by striving for excellence and professional growth, by recognizing their own limitations and seeking help when needed, by seeking frequent constructive feedback on their interactions with one another, and by conducting themselves professionally at all times in demeanor, language and appearance in the classroom, with patients, and in health care settings.

Teachers will commit their time and effort to ensure appropriate delivery of an interactive curriculum. Students will attend all required sessions for their own learning, to enhance the learning environment for their peers, and out of respect for their teacher's effort.

Teachers and students will demonstrate respect and professional concern by holding each other to the highest standards in learning, without abuse, humiliation or harassment of any kind, by not exploiting a relationship for personal gain or advantage, and by demonstrating the highest standards of ethical conduct in all settings.

### **DRUG-FREE ENVIRONMENT**

Using alcohol and other drugs in a way that could interfere with clinical or educational responsibilities of students and teachers is prohibited.

### **INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS**

Romantic or sexual relationships between teachers (including faculty, residents, fellows, near-peer teachers, and other health care and research professionals) and their students are prohibited while the teacher has direct supervision of or any influence on the student's assessment or academic progress. Any relationship which could reasonably be perceived as having any influence on the objective assessment of the student by the teacher must be immediately disclosed by the teacher to the appropriate education leadership (e.g. Clerkship Director).

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Teachers will exercise strict confidentiality when providing health care to students and complete impartiality when assessing student performance. The CWRU School of Medicine prohibits any faculty member or resident/fellow who has provided health services to a student from completing any formative or summative assessment of that student. Students must not ask any faculty or resident/fellow who has provided them health care to provide any assessment of their performance.

### **MISTREATMENT, HARRASSMENT & NEGLECT**

Mistreatment is disrespectful behavior by a teacher that interferes with the learning process. Examples of mistreatment include public belittlement or humiliation, threats of physical harm or punishment, inappropriate requests to do personal services (shopping or babysitting), sexual harassment, and discrimination or harassment

based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. Neglect includes situations in which a student is openly ignored, is excluded from important decisions, or is made to feel “invisible.” Neglect is different from overt mistreatment but can still interfere with the learning process.

Harassment, mistreatment, and neglect policies are discussed at new student orientation, orientation to year 2, and again prior to starting clerkships. Students who feel they have **experienced harassment, mistreatment, or neglect during the conduct of the curriculum, and are uncomfortable addressing this directly with the colleague involved are urged to discuss their concerns as soon as possible through one of the options detailed below.**

- Students in any phase of the curriculum may address their concerns with the course, block or clerkship director, Assistant Dean charged with that phase of the curriculum, or the Associate Dean for Curriculum.
- Students in any phase of the program are strongly encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of their Society Dean, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, or their Physician Advisor, or, because the deans work as a group practice, students may choose to speak to another Student Affairs dean if they feel more comfortable doing so.
- Alternatively, students have the option of contacting the Vice Dean for Medical Education, Dr. Lia Logio at [xl789@case.edu](mailto:xl789@case.edu) or Ms. Shirley Mosley, the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students at the University. The University Student Affairs office is not part of the medical school administration. Students can e-mail Ms. Mosley at [shirley.mosley@case.edu](mailto:shirley.mosley@case.edu) or call the office at 216.368.2020 to make an appointment. The office is located at 110 Adelbert Hall on Adelbert Road.
- Online Reporting: Both the University and College programs have established an online “Mistreatment or Neglect” reporting mechanism, by which students can report experiences of harassment, mistreatment, or neglect. These reports are confidential but not anonymous and will be reviewed by the appropriate Student Affairs dean and may be referred to the Mistreatment Working Group for further investigation. The form is available online: [Mistreatment or Neglect Reporting Form](#).
- Box Reporting: Both the University and College programs have established a hardcopy reporting system. Boxes are located outside the HEC 4<sup>th</sup> floor student learning spaces. These reports can be anonymous or confidential and will be reviewed by the appropriate Student Affairs dean. Note: Without specific information, the School may be limited in its ability to respond to the report.

#### **What Happens When a Report is Made?**

All reports are handled confidentially, and wherever possible, de-identified information about the event is used. The School of Medicine is obligated to follow federal guidelines (Title IX) for reporting sexual misconduct. For other situations, the Society Dean or Associate Dean of Student Affairs will pursue the report as follows:

1. Reports are collected by medical school staff in the Offices of Student Affairs.
2. If known, the reporting student will be contacted by Student Affairs Dean, basic information verified, and additional information requested if needed.
3. The report is logged in the Office of Student Affairs on the University’s Log of Student Complaints.
4. If appropriate, the report is redirected to the University (i.e., Title IX).
5. A de-identified report is reviewed by the Student Affairs Dean with the appropriate curricular leader.

Depending on the judged severity of the event and timing related to grades and evaluation, the Student Affairs Dean may determine if any of the following is appropriate:

- Report is shared with the professional involved
- Report is shared with course director, clerkship director and/or program director
- Report is shared with the professional’s supervisor
- Report is shared with department chair (in the case of a faculty member)
- Report is shared with Dean
- Report is shared with Office of Faculty Affairs

When deemed appropriate, reported professionals and/or their supervisors are asked to create an action plan that is shared with the Society Dean or Student Affairs Dean.

The Society Dean or Student Affairs Dean will post an incident report summary including outcome to the learning management system or student portal (without any identifying features) and, if known, send to the student who submitted the report.

Unprofessional behavior with learners that is severe or repeats despite feedback will result in removal from the teaching program and may be cause for dismissal from their residency or degree program in the case of trainees, or, for faculty members, termination for just cause as provided in the CWRU Faculty Handbook.

**Aggregated Reports**

The School of Medicine reports aggregated de-identified data on learner mistreatment to each department chair and the Dean on a quarterly basis.

**Discussion/Reporting Resources:**

- Society Dean, Student Affairs Dean, or Physician Advisor
- Lia Logio, MD, Vice Dean for Medical Education: [lj1789@case.edu](mailto:lj1789@case.edu)
- Shirley Mosley, the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students: [shirley.mosley@case.edu](mailto:shirley.mosley@case.edu)
- [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Consensual Relationship Policy](#)
- [Community Concerns Reporting System \(CCRS\)](#)

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## Addendum to Teacher-Learner Relationship Policy

### Mistreatment Complaint Procedures

This document describes a process for addressing reports of student mistreatment in the CWRU School of Medicine. Written individual reports of student mistreatment can be received through a variety of mechanisms as described in the **Teacher Learner Relationship Policy**. Depending on the mechanism of the reporting, the report is directed to one of the following deans: Curriculum (Pre-clerkship), Clinical Education, Student Affairs. This individual is responsible for the Initial Steps and Triage described below.

#### **Initial Steps:**

- Determine if harm and safety are a concern, immediately refer to main campus student affairs (216)368-2020, CWRU Police (216) 368-3333 (emergency) or (216) 368-3300 (non-emergency)
- Determine if this is a Title IX issue and refer to main campus Student Affairs (216) 368-2020
- Assess power structure: Grading/Assessor/Evaluator vs. Non-Grading/Non-Assessor
- Obtain additional information about the incident if indicated, including any prior history of mistreatment
- Record on Higher Learning Commission (HLC) log<sup>1</sup> maintained in The Office of Student Affairs ([email Molly Simmons](mailto:Molly.Simmons))

**Next Step: The CWRU SOM Mistreatment Working Group (MWG)**, chaired by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, is comprised of Society Deans, CCLCM Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs (or their designee), Associate Deans of Curriculum (or their designees), a clerkship director appointed by the Joint Clinical Oversight Group, a faculty affairs representative, and a representative from University Student Affairs, as needed. The MWG reviews reports presented by the individuals above, determines the level of severity of the complaint, and develops an action plan to address the report. The MWG may elect to share the report with:

- The professional involved
- The course director, clerkship director and/or program director who may, in extreme cases, elect to file a patient safety or disruptive physician report
- The professional's supervisor/ Program Director
- The division/department chair (in the case of a faculty member)
- The Dean
- The Office of Faculty Affairs

#### **The Mistreatment Working Group will develop an action plan, including the responsibility for implementing the plan, which may include any of the following:**

- Embargo action until completion of educational activity
- Deliver a written copy of Teacher Learner Relationship Policy to the individual involved
- Request a reflection/apology as indicated
- Disregard grading comments and evaluation from teacher named in the complaint
- Recommend teaching skills development
- Set up a teaching monitoring plan
- Recommend removal from medical student teaching

#### **Reporting:**

- The Society Dean or Student Affairs Dean will post an incident report summary including outcome to the learning management system or student portal (without any identifying features) and if known, send to the student who submitted the report.
- The chair of the MWG sends a copy of the MWG action plan to the individual involved, the relevant curriculum dean(s), and the HLC log.
- The Vice Dean for Medical Education will annually present to the community an aggregated report of student mistreatment for the prior academic year.

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<sup>1</sup> The Higher Learning Commission accredits the University; the student complaint log is an accreditation requirement.