

**Policy Title: Policy on Teacher-Learner Relationships**

**Approved By: CME**

**Date Approved:**

**Review Period: Every 3 years**

**Responsible Office or Committee: Mistreatment Working Group**

**LCME Affiliated Elements: 3.6, 12.5**

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**Policy Statement:**

The CWRU School of medicine promotes professional behaviors of teachers and students to promote flourishing and a safe learning environment. 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 all aspects of the educational program.

**Purpose of Policy:**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the expectations for behavior for teachers and learners and describes procedures for reporting misconduct.

**Scope of Policy:**

This policy applies to all medical students enrolled in the School of Medicine at Case Western Reserve University, including students in the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine (CCLCM) and the University Program.

**Policy:**

**Respect**

Teachers, including all faculty, residents, fellows, near-peer teachers, and other health care and research professionals, are committed to treating our students as professional colleagues with delineated privileges and responsibilities integrated throughout their education. Students and teachers are expected to demonstrate respect for others by upholding an atmosphere conducive to learning, interacting in a considerate and cooperative manner with others, judging colleagues fairly, and attempting to resolve conflicts respectfully. Students and teachers may 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 must 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 commit their time and effort to ensure appropriate delivery of an interactive curriculum. Students are expected to 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 must 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 must 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. Without exception, students must not ask any faculty or resident/fellow involved in their personal health care to provide any assessment of their performance.

#### Mistreatment, Harassment, and 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 [lx1789@case.edu](mailto:lx1789@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:
  - The School of Medicine has established an online 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 staff and faculty member and may be referred to the Mistreatment Working Group for further investigation. The form is available online: [Mistreatment or Neglect Reporting Form](#). A new reporting portal, the [Accountability Management System](#), has been created for all members of the School of Medicine community, including students, faculty, and staff. Concerns about mistreatment, neglect, bias, and microaggressions can be reported in a confidential manner. The form is available online: [Accountability Management System](#)
- 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 and detailed 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, reports will be handled as follows:

- Reports are collected by medical school staff in the Offices of Student Affairs.
- If known, the reporting student will be contacted by a staff member, basic information verified, and additional information requested if needed.
- The report is logged in the Office of Student Affairs on the University's Log of Student Complaints.
- If appropriate, the report is redirected to the University (i.e., Title IX).
- 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 Mistreatment Working Group.

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 egregious, severe, or continued 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: [lx1789@case.edu](mailto:lx1789@case.edu)



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- Shirley Mosley, 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 \(CCRS\)](#)