

Approved By: President

Date Approved: January 6, 2025

Effective Date: Not Available

- 1. Summary:** This policy establishes official disciplinary actions for violations of the *College's Student Conduct Policy*.
- 2. Rationale:** This policy is necessary to ensure consistent and equitable disciplinary action for violations of the *College's Student Conduct Policy*.
- 3. Entities Affected:** students
- 4. Definitions:** not applicable
- 5. Policy:** Student disciplinary action for violations of the *College's Student Conduct Policy* is implemented according to the processes and standards laid out in this policy. In cases of sexual and other unlawful harassment, the *College's Title IX Policy* is to be implemented. The *College's Academic Honesty Policy* is to be implemented in cases of academic dishonesty.

Composition:

1. Dean of Students (Committee Chair)
2. Director of Student Success
3. Faculty Member
4. Academic Affairs Representative
5. Business Representative

Inquiry

The Dean of Students is responsible for supervising student conduct and is charged with investigating, processing, and reviewing all alleged Criswell College standards and complaints violations. The Student Disciplinary Committee (SDC) is the institutional assembly for student judicial matters. The Dean of Students, working with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Vice President of Finance, will appoint the faculty representative, academic affairs representative, and a business office representative. Under the leadership of the Dean of Students, the SDC has the right to request additional documentation or recommendations depending on the severity of the case.

The Dean of Students receives all referrals concerning matters that may become disciplinary cases. A confidential investigation is then conducted to determine if an offense has occurred. This preliminary inquiry may include interviews with all parties involved on and off campus.

The Dean of Students may elect to handle the case personally through an informal hearing or may, at his discretion, refer the case to the SDC for a formal hearing. Committee members can recuse themselves from formal hearings based on conflicts of interest with any person(s) involved. A judicial hearing allows for the clarification of charges, evidence, witnesses, and defense. A ruling is formed based on the preliminary investigations and case evidence presented throughout the hearing. An official ruling may be postponed following the hearing if the case merits further investigation. All cases involving a potential disciplinary dismissal will be referred to the SDC. In informal and formal hearings, all students will be granted due process.

Conflict of Interest Policy for Committee Members

In any case where a committee member has a direct personal or professional relationship with the student under investigation or evaluation, the committee member should recuse themselves from the case, or the remaining committee members may remove them on the basis of the perceived conflict of interest.

Relationships, personal friendships, mentorships, or professional associations may compromise impartiality. This policy ensures that all proceedings remain unbiased, fair, and transparent.

Responsibilities

1. Disciplinary Proceedings

- Receive and review reports of student misconduct or violations of the institution's code of conduct.
- Conduct impartial/complete investigations, providing fair opportunities for the accused student(s) to present their side of the story.
- Determine appropriate disciplinary actions under established policies and procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the disciplinary process, respecting the privacy of all parties involved.

2. Student Development

- Identify opportunities for student development and growth beyond punitive measures.
- Offer support and guidance to students involved in disciplinary matters to foster positive behavioral changes.
- Collaborate with other student support services to provide holistic support to students facing challenges.

3. Policy Review and Improvement

- Periodically review and update the institution's code of conduct and disciplinary policies to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
- Solicit feedback from students, faculty, and staff regarding the disciplinary process and make necessary improvements based on the feedback received.
- Stay informed about best practices in student discipline and incorporate relevant advancements into the institution's policies and procedures.

Due Process

Student rights extend to due process in all disciplinary matters. Students have the right to be correctly notified of the suspected offense(s) being investigated and informed of all judicial proceedings. Students charged with an offense have the right to a fair hearing and to present witnesses and evidence in their defense. Due process also dictates that all students found to violate College standards will receive written notification of disciplinary sanctions and rulings.

Appeal

Students have the right to appeal to the SDC concerning the Dean of Students' disciplinary decisions. Requests for appeal must be made in writing and submitted to the SDC via the Dean of Students within ten (10) days of notification from the Student Services Office.

Disciplinary decisions of the SDC may be appealed to the President of the College. Appeal requests must be made in writing and submitted to the President's office within ten (10) days from notification from the SDC. All decisions of the President are final.

Records

The Student Services Office maintains all student conduct records, which are property of the College and not open to public access. Notices of disciplinary sanctions are copied and filed within students' permanent academic records.

Sanctions

Conditions and terms of sanctions will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Some disciplinary conditions may include restitution, reconciliation, counseling, campus service, fines, withholding of school records, and avoidance agreements.

Disciplinary sanctions are issued under the following guidelines:

- All sanctions issued will be in proportion to the nature and degree of the infraction;
- All sanctions issued will be administered impartially;
- All sanctions issued will be determined, decided, and administered in a spirit of Christian concern with compassion for the offender; and
- All sanctions are redemptive toward the offender and designed to produce a positive campus environment.

The following sanctions may be administered.

- *Conduct Warning*: A Conduct Warning is a written notice given to the student and filed in his or her academic record. It specifies unacceptable conduct and indicates consequences related to further misconduct. Failure to comply with the conditions may incur further disciplinary action.
- *Disciplinary Probation*: Disciplinary Probation is a specified time period during which the student's attitude and conduct will be evaluated. Special conditions will be established for the successful completion of the probationary period. Formal notation of the probation is filed in the student's academic record. Students on probation forfeit all institutionally funded financial aid and may not hold any student leadership position. In addition, students on probation may be prohibited from some College-sponsored co-curricular activities. Probation for more than two (2) semesters will be grounds for suspension from the College.
- *Disciplinary Suspension*: Disciplinary Suspension is a specific time period during which the student is suspended from active enrollment and participation in the College and its co-curricular events. A formal notice of suspension is filed in the student's academic record. Specific conditions are placed on readmission. Consideration for readmission is based on the successful completion of all suspension conditions and upon approval from the Dean of Students. Disciplinary suspension may be imposed during or at the end of a semester, and readmission may involve a period of disciplinary probation.

- *Dismissal*: Dismissal constitutes official termination of a student’s relationship with Criswell College. Readmission is usually not granted. A formal notice of dismissal is filed in the student’s academic record.

All students under disciplinary sanction are responsible for fulfilling financial obligations to the institution. Students who must withdraw from classes during the semester due to campus disciplinary actions are subject to standard school refund policies (see Criswell College *Catalog*).

6. Procedure

1. Reporting

- Any member of the institution's community can report incidents of misconduct or violations of the code of conduct to the SDC. Reports can be submitted in writing or through an online reporting system, ensuring ease of access and confidentiality.

2. Investigation

- Upon receiving a report, the SDC will initiate an investigation, gather relevant evidence, and interview all involved parties. The committee will ensure a fair and impartial investigation, respecting the rights of the accused student(s) and adhering to due process.

3. Decision-Making

- Based on the investigation's findings, the SDC will determine whether disciplinary action is warranted. The committee will consider factors such as the severity of the offense, the student's past behavior, mitigating circumstances, and the potential for rehabilitation.
- Decisions regarding disciplinary actions will be communicated to the involved parties in writing, along with an explanation of the rationale behind the decision.

4. Appeals

- Students have the right to appeal against the decisions of the SDC within one week of the date they are informed of the decision by the committee.
- The College’s Executive Cabinet will review appeals, ensuring an impartial review of the case. Based on the merits of the appeal, the Executive Cabinet may uphold, modify, or overturn the SDC's decision.

Confidentiality

All proceedings of the SDC, including reports, investigations, and decisions, will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Information related to disciplinary matters will only be shared with individuals directly involved in the process on a need-to-know basis. Per federal guidelines, disciplinary files are considered “education records” and covered by FERPA: “*records that are directly related to a student and that are maintained by an educational agency or institution or a party acting for or on behalf of the agency or institution.*” *Education records include but are not limited to “grades, transcripts, class lists, student course schedules, . . . student financial information . . . , and student discipline files” (34 CFR § 99.2).*

- Implementation:** The Student Services Office is responsible for maintaining procedures by which this policy can be implemented.
- Responsibility for Compliance:** Vice President of Student Affairs and Communications
- Notification:** This policy will be posted on the College’s website, and a summary will be published in the College’s *Student Handbook*.
- Policy Review:** This policy will be regularly reviewed according to the College’s policy review procedure.

For the Office of the President only:

Policy version: 4.0

Policy number: 2.017

Related policies: Student Conduct Policy, Title IX Policy, Academic Honesty Policy

Policy History

Version 1.0	Not Available
Version 2.0	October 25, 2023
Version 3.0	December 2, 2024
Version 4.0	January 6, 2025