

Community

Community Standards Policy



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At Carleton College we celebrate both individuality and a strong sense of shared community values. Students who enter this academic and social community make a commitment to healthy exchanges of ideas and acknowledge that living in a community requires tolerance, compromise, and sensitivity to others. It is important to treat others with respect, dignity and understanding in order to create a community where civility is valued. At times each student will have to renegotiate personal boundaries and fit individual freedoms into the broader context of responsibility to the student community and the values of the College. In addition, Carleton College is not an isolated sanctuary apart from the rest of society. Consequently, all students are subject to local, state, and federal law, as are other residents of Northfield, MN.

The values, policies and procedures described below have been developed through participatory governance, including the approval of College Council and the Carleton College Board of Trustees. They reflect the continuing, actively renewed consensus of the College community.

I. Carleton's Values

A. Student Development

Students are recognized as adults and therefore should receive the respect and assume the responsibilities that come with this status. The journey from late adolescence to adulthood is not a linear progression. It is an exciting, confusing, and stressful developmental process unique to each individual. The mission of the College is “to liberate individuals from the constraints imposed by ignorance or complacency and prepare them broadly to lead rewarding, creative, and useful lives.” In that spirit, students are routinely challenged in the classroom and in their daily lives to test boundaries, take risks, and stretch themselves. Over time, all students engage in a wide range of developmental tasks, including:

- Enhancing academic skills.
- Defining and re-defining educational and career goals.
- Formulating personal identity.
- Adjusting to community/group living.
- Developing appropriate self-management, health, and wellness skills.
- Analyzing, forming or confirming values.
- Developing a mature style of relating to others and exploring interpersonal relationships.
- Accepting the consequences of one's actions.
- Understanding and developing appreciation for cultural and lifestyle differences.
- Developing a sense of fairness and compromise.
- Developing skills to work effectively in groups and participate in an enterprise larger than oneself.

B. Self-Governance and Personal Freedom

Fundamental to a Carleton experience is the value of self-governance. Most students come directly from home and secondary school environments that are much more structured than life at Carleton. Personal freedom is both an opportunity and a challenge. In the exercise of personal choices, students assume certain responsibilities:

- Taking ownership of their actions and expressions of opinion.
- Ensuring that their actions or the actions of others do not infringe upon the rights of others or the fundamental integrity of the living and learning environment.
- Respecting the rights of others to the same freedom of expression claimed for themselves.

The College does not police its students nor act in *loco parentis*. We do, however, observe and respond to student behavior, and offer guidance, advice, and counsel to assist students in making good decisions for themselves and for the community. We

expect students to comply with the community values, standards, and expectations set forth in this policy. At times we intervene in the lives of students to assist in setting boundaries, especially for those who are unable or unwilling to exercise personal freedom responsibly.

C. A Safe and Healthy Living-Learning Community

Carleton College has a deep commitment to providing a safe and secure environment, in which students can live, learn, work and pursue their interests. Threats to personal safety, compromises of the learning environment, and disruptions of students' rights to live with a reasonable degree of peace are cause for concern and intervention.

D. Academic Freedom

As an institution dedicated to learning and teaching, Carleton College is committed to the principle of free expression and exploration of ideas in an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect. The College therefore also embraces the related principle that all members of its community shall have access to its educational facilities, activities, information resources, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, status with regard to public assistance, age, or disability. These principles guide the College's relationships with individuals and should guide the interaction of all members of the community.

1. Open Discourse

A diverse student body, faculty, and staff participating in a learning community of civil and open discourse provide the most productive environment for genuine liberal learning. Carleton recognizes and affirms the desirability for individuals to have the support of others who share their backgrounds or values, as

well as the concomitant necessity for each person to take the risks, and accept the challenges inherent in engaging in genuinely open conversation with others who are different from oneself.

2. The Educational Process

Although the College attempts through its policies to limit or eliminate certain behaviors and actions that may be hurtful to others, Carleton cannot guarantee that the environment will always be comfortable for all members of the community. Often, the educational process is disturbing and unsettling. When one's ideas are under attack and one's values are being challenged, the effect may be simultaneously painful and highly educational. Thus, behavior that is disturbing or unsettling to an individual or group is not necessarily discriminatory. In this regard, it is imperative that teachers and students be able to take controversial positions without fear, in accordance with the principle of academic freedom.

3. Civility

All discourse, as well as treatment of individuals—in offices, classrooms, residences, or any other setting or mode of communication—should be respectful of the individual, whether or not there is disagreement on matters of substance, taste, politics, or evidence. Creating and sustaining a climate of civility in an institution of voluntary membership is the responsibility of each individual.

4. Freedom from Discrimination

While the nature of an academic community is to provide a milieu for the expression, criticism and discussion of the widest range of opinions, it does not provide license for bigotry in the form of demeaning, discriminatory speech or actions. Thus, the presentation of a reasoned or evidenced claim about a societal group that offends members of that group is to be distinguished from a gratuitous denigrating claim about, or addressed to, an individual or group.

The former is bona fide academic behavior while the latter may demean, degrade or victimize in a discriminatory manner and, if so, undermines the above principles.

Discriminatory speech and actions are especially abhorrent when they are made anonymously, for anonymity precludes the possibility of an exchange and exploration of ideas; moreover, such an anonymous message—by the very nature of its delivery—is a threat to the recipient. Discrimination by one person against another is also particularly abhorrent when the first person is in a position of power with respect to the second, whether in the academic, administrative, political, or social hierarchy on the campus.

II. Student Conduct: Expectations, Rules, and Regulations

Carleton accords students the opportunity to learn about life, to challenge their own values and the ideas and values of others, and, in so doing, to become responsible members of the College community. While the College imposes no specific moral standard or creed on its students, each student is responsible for living up to the values cited above and the policies, rules, and regulations detailed below. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

The expectations, rules and regulations for Carleton College students and the policies detailed below pertain to students on and off campus, while participating in College programs and activities, domestic or international. Student behavior occurring anywhere other than on property owned or rented by Carleton will be of concern to the College if, in the judgment of the Dean of Students, there is sufficient information to determine that the behavior alleged would adversely and seriously affect the student's suitability as a member of the College community.

When any violation of College policy, rule or regulation is motivated by intolerance or hate directed toward an individual or group based on characteristics such as race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or political or religious belief,

the sanction administered by the appropriate administrative officer or hearing board will be increased in severity and may include separation from the College.

A. Academic Honesty and Personal Integrity

We expect students to do their own academic work and to be honest and truthful in their interactions with College officials. The following actions are prohibited:

1. Cheating, plagiarism, accessing unauthorized materials, sharing information on any exam with others before the end of all final exams, abuse of library or other instructional materials, misuse of library privileges, and unlawful duplication and/or distribution of copyrighted materials.
2. Knowingly furnishing false information to the College with intent to deceive or defraud.
3. Forgery; alteration or misuse of documents, records or identification.

B. Responsibilities to the College

We expect students to conduct themselves reasonably and appropriately, on and off-campus. This includes respectful responses to College officials, appropriate use of College facilities, and compliance with sanctions applied through established judicial procedures. The following conduct is prohibited:

- Intentional obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings or other College activities.
- Disorderly, overly aggressive, or obscene conduct, or breach of peace on College-owned or leased property or at College-sponsored or supervised functions.
- Refusal to comply with the directions of a College official or hindering an official acting in the performance of his/her duties.
- Unauthorized use of college facilities, including but not limited to:
 1. Unauthorized access to or use of buildings and other facilities such as tunnels, roofs, the water tower, construction zones, and other prohibited areas.
 2. Improper possession, use, or duplication of keys or keycards; abuse of the card access system.

3. Unauthorized access to computers, computer systems or computer accounts; deliberately attempting to disrupt the performance of a computer system/network; infringement of copyrights or license agreements; forging e-mails; illegal copying of software; breaking in or attempting to break into the College's or another person's system; stealing passwords or using the computing system to harass others.
- Attempted or actual theft or damage to College property.
 - Misappropriation of College or student organization funds; tampering with a student government election or selection process.
 - Failure to observe sanctions applied through established judicial process.
 - Conduct which adversely and seriously affects the student's suitability as a member of the College community

C. Respect for Individuals and Personal Property

We expect students to treat all members of the College community with care, respect and dignity. The following conduct is prohibited:

- Physical, verbal or psychological abuse, harassment, intimidation or other conduct (whether willful or negligent) that threatens or endangers the health, well being, or safety of oneself or of any person on College-owned or leased property, or at College-sponsored or supervised functions.
- Sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, or sexually inappropriate behavior. (See Policies Against Sexual Misconduct)
- Hazing, defined as
 - an intentional, knowing, and reckless act which may endanger the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of a person,
 - committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with other persons,
 - against a person, regardless of that person's willingness to participate,
 - for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or an organization (such as a club, society, association, athletic team, club sport team, musical groups, or student government), and

- causes or is likely to contribute to a substantial risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the group or organization, of physical or psychological injury.
- Attempted or actual theft of or damage to personal property.

D. Health, Safety, and the Law

Students are expected to make sound decisions regarding the health and safety of themselves and others and to comply with laws applicable to all residents of Northfield. The following conduct is prohibited:

- Alcohol: The use of alcohol except as permitted by law; the abuse of alcohol by any student whether of legal age or not. (See the College Alcohol and Drug Policy.)
- Drugs: The use, possession, sale, transfer, distribution, manufacture or cultivation of any controlled substance, except prescription drugs used by the person for whom and for the purpose for which they were prescribed.
- Dangerous implements or materials: The use or possession of explosives, firecrackers, firearms, BB guns, explosive materials, or knives with blades in excess of four inches on campus property. (The Dean of Students may permit a student to have a firearm on campus for hunting season, but such permission is discretionary with the Dean of Students. If permission is given, the firearm must be kept secured in the Security Office.)
- Safety and Security: Misusing or tampering with fire alarm systems, fire extinguishers, or other security equipment, or compromising any College security system. (See also Fire Safety in the Housing and Residential Living section.)

E. Compliance with College Policies

Many programs and facilities have established policies and procedures that govern student behavior. Students are expected to comply with all written policies of the College, which include but are not limited to:

- Motor vehicle policy.
- Residential life policies.
- Computing and telecommunications policies.
- Library policies.
- Policies governing the use of recreational facilities and activities.
- Policies governing student organizations and club sports.
- Dining hall and meal plan policies.
- Smoking policy.
- Student records policy.

III. Responses to Alleged Violations of College Policy

A. Executive Authority

The President of the College and executive officers of the President's Cabinet have the obligation to attempt to ensure the safety of individuals, the protection of property, the continuity of the educational process, and the preservation of the legal status of the College. In executing these obligations, the President (or their designee) is specifically empowered to determine the status of any student at any time, may remove individuals from campus or prohibit individuals from being on campus and/or expel, suspend, or otherwise take action with respect to such individuals. If a student is expelled, suspended, withdrawn, or placed on leave of absence as a result of the exercise of executive authority, the terms upon which resumption of normal student status will be permitted, if any, will be stated at the time of the decision.

The College resolves allegations through both informal responses and formal disciplinary action. This is often based on the seriousness of the concern and whether the actions violate the Community Standards or other College policies.

B. Informal Response

The system of response to allegations of student misconduct is an educational one. The very nature of a residential college creates opportunities and challenges for young adults living in community, some for the first time. It is not unusual for young adults to occasionally exercise poor judgments, act insensitively or without thinking, or engage in inappropriate behaviors. Consequently, many minor incidents (e.g., excessive noise, roommate conflicts) are handled informally through conflict resolution, mediation, or simple agreements that the parties involved will cease and desist a certain conduct. Such cases usually do not result in official disciplinary records or sanctions, but may be introduced at a later date if patterns of unacceptable behavior emerge.

C. Formal Disciplinary Action

When it is neither possible nor appropriate to resolve a conflict or disciplinary matter informally, the alleged violation is forwarded to the Dean of Students Office or Provost's Office for action by staff.

Students who violate College policies may be required to go through a formal disciplinary process.

There are three categories of policies that are covered within the Community Standards Policy: Academic Misconduct, Sexual Misconduct, and Social Misconduct.

Each policy has a separate and distinct method of resolution. Follow the links below for information about each process.

- [Academic Misconduct \(https://www.carleton.edu/committees/academic-standing/asc-academic-integrity-subcommittee/\)](https://www.carleton.edu/committees/academic-standing/asc-academic-integrity-subcommittee/) – responses to violations of academic integrity
- [Sexual Misconduct \(https://www.carleton.edu/sexual-misconduct/policy-procedure/\)](https://www.carleton.edu/sexual-misconduct/policy-procedure/) – responses to sexual misconduct
- [Social Misconduct \(https://www.carleton.edu/dean-of-students/student-support/conduct-process/\)](https://www.carleton.edu/dean-of-students/student-support/conduct-process/) – responses to other policy violations and concerning behaviors

Once an investigation is complete, the appropriate judicial authority determines whether a violation of College policy has occurred, based on a preponderance of evidence (i.e., whether it is more likely than not that a violation occurred). If a violation is found, sanctions may be assigned.

1. Reports of Alleged Violations

Any member of the Carleton College community may file a report by filling out a Community Concern Form (<https://www.carleton.edu/dean-of-students/forms/community-concern/>). Reports are routed to the appropriate staff member for follow up.

2. Rights and Responsibilities of the Respondent

A student respondent has the right to:

- A fair and reasonable process, using a preponderance of the evidence standard of proof (more likely than not).
- Be notified of the alleged policy violation(s).
- An opportunity to share their perspective.
- An advisor (as each process allows).
- Provide notice to the College of witnesses, statements, evidence, or other information pertinent to the case.
- A written notice of the decision.
- Reasonable accommodations for disabilities.

A student respondent has the responsibility to:

- Be truthful and forthcoming.
- Share information to help the conduct officer/hearing board fully understand their perspective of what happened.
- Recognize the impacts of their actions on others and the community.
- Recognize the impacts of their actions on themselves.

3. Disciplinary Sanctions

Disciplinary sanctions may be administered to students found in violation of campus policies. Disciplinary sanctions may be imposed upon individuals, as well as groups and organizations. More than one sanction may be imposed. Prior violations of campus policies may be considered at the discretion of the College when determining sanctions. Students who are assigned educational sanctions must complete them in a timely manner, prior to deadlines. *(Additional information about sanctions can be found on each of the process websites.)*

4. Appeals

Students found in violation through formal disciplinary action may appeal the finding of a violation or the sanctions assigned, or both, to the appropriate appeal authority within the timeframe indicated for each process.

IV. Disciplinary Records

DISCIPLINARY RECORD RETENTION

Records of disciplinary action are maintained by the Dean of Students Office (social misconduct), The VP for Inclusion, Equity, and Community (sexual misconduct), and the Office of the Provost (academic misconduct/integrity). Disciplinary records are part of the student's education record and are therefore subject to privacy protections under the College's Student Records Policy, as required by The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Disciplinary actions may be taken by assigned staff members or one of the judicial boards (the Academic Standing Committee, the Judicial Hearing Board, or the Community Board on Sexual Misconduct). Written determinations may include a description of the specific violation of College policy and the resulting sanctions, which range from warnings to expulsion.

- Records of disciplinary status up to and including disciplinary probation are maintained for seven years post-graduation or seven years after withdrawal from the College. These records are not noted on the student's transcript.
- Records of disciplinary suspensions are maintained for seven years post-graduation or seven years after withdrawal from the College. Suspensions are coded "withdrew" on the academic transcript.
- Records of expulsion are maintained for ten years after the student's separation from the College and recorded permanently on the student's academic transcript as "disciplinary dismissal."

Students may request a copy of their own disciplinary records. Student disciplinary records are only shared with third-parties in accordance with College policy and applicable law. For further detail on the maintenance and disclosure of student records, see [Student Records Policy](https://www.carleton.edu/handbook/it/?policy=81&a=student) (<https://www.carleton.edu/handbook/it/?policy=81&a=student>).

V. Parental/Legal Guardian Notification

Though parental/legal guardian notification is permitted under law in most cases, the College prefers to communicate directly with students. Customarily, the Dean of Students Office or the Provost's Office does not notify parents/legal guardians concerning policy violations that do not involve suspension or expulsion from the College. However, should a student receive a sanction that suggests that any future violation may lead to suspension, the Vice President for Student Life/Dean of Students (or their designee) has discretion to determine whether a college official should notify parents/legal guardians about the student's status. There may also be decisions to notify parents/legal guardians about other serious concerns.

Approved by Board of Trustees Executive Committee on June 20, 2002.

Student Development: Approved on April 8, 2003.

Self-Governance and Personal Freedom: Approved on April 8, 2003.

A Safe and Healthy Living-Learning Community: Approved on April 8, 2003.

Open Discourse: Approved on April 8, 2003.

The Educational Process: Approved on April 8, 2003.

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Academic Freedom: Approved on April 8, 2003.

Carleton's Values: Approved on April 8, 2003.

Academic Honesty and Personal Integrity: Approved on April 8, 2003.

Responsibilities to the College: Approved on April 8, 2003.

Respect for Individuals and Personal Property: Approved on April 8, 2003.

Health, Safety, and the Law: Approved on April 8, 2003.

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Disciplinary Records: Approved on April 8, 2003. Revised and approved by the Board of Trustees February 8, 2025

Parental/Legal Guardian Notification: Approved on April 8, 2003. Revised and approved by the Board of Trustees February 8, 2025

For: [Students \(/handbook/community/policy/239/community-standards-policy/?a=student\)](/handbook/community/policy/239/community-standards-policy/?a=student)

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Previous: [Common Time \(https://www.carleton.edu/handbook/community/policy/351/common-time/?a=student\)](https://www.carleton.edu/handbook/community/policy/351/common-time/?a=student)

Next: [Contributing to Landscape Improvements and Maintenance](https://www.carleton.edu/handbook/community/policy/212/contributing-to-landscape-improvements-and-maintenance/?a=student)

[\(/https://www.carleton.edu/handbook/community/policy/212/contributing-to-landscape-improvements-and-maintenance/?a=student\)](https://www.carleton.edu/handbook/community/policy/212/contributing-to-landscape-improvements-and-maintenance/?a=student)

[List all Policies & Guidelines for Community \(/handbook/community/policy/239/community-standards-policy/?a=student\)](/handbook/community/policy/239/community-standards-policy/?a=student)

Campus Handbook

The Campus Handbook is the one place to find all official Carleton College policies and guidelines. It contains the [Student](/handbook/?a=student), [Faculty](/handbook/?a=faculty), and [Staff](/handbook/?a=staff) handbooks. These policies and guidelines are subject to change.

[Campus Handbook Archive](/handbook/archive/)

[\(/handbook/archive/\)](/handbook/archive/)

[Tools for Policy/Guideline](#)

[Maintainers](#)

[\(/handbook/maintainers/\)](/handbook/maintainers/)

Email: campus-handbook.group@carleton.edu
(<mailto:campus-handbook.group@carleton.edu>)

Campus Handbook pages maintained by [the Web Team](#)
(<mailto:web@carleton.edu>)

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