

FAQ for Families and Advocates

Q: What is the purpose of the Code of Community Responsibility (Code)?

A: The need for human beings to resolve conflicts is recognized by the college as an opportunity for individual growth, as well as a time to affirm the Code of Community Responsibility (Code). Though it is not designed to be a contentious process, we do recognize that people do not always agree.

Maintaining a balance between the individual and the community is a continual process that requires insight, sensitivity, and diligence on the part of each member of the college. Colby-Sawyer student community members are expected to read, understand, and abide by the college's policies, the student conduct process and procedures, as well as their student rights and responsibilities as outlined throughout the Code. To review the Code, please refer to <http://colby-sawyer.edu/assets/citizenship/code-of-conduct.pdf>.

Q: Will I be notified if my student violates the Code of Community Responsibility?

A: The college considers student conduct records to be part of a student's educational record, and as such the college complies with all applicable legislation, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Further, the college primary relationship is with its students, and not with their parents or guardians.

However, the college recognizes that parents or guardians maintain an interest in their students' behavior while at college, and can play a positive role in preventing further misconduct. Therefore, the college may notify the parents or guardians of any dependent student under the age of twenty-one who is placed on probation, or is suspended or dismissed from the college. The college also reserves the right to notify the parents or guardians of any dependent student under the age of twenty-one who has been found responsible for violating any drug or alcohol policies. Notification may be deferred at the discretion of the vice president of student development and dean of students or his/her and/or a department member from the Department of Citizenship Education.

This notification is intended as a means to encourage communication between students and their parents or guardians to provide the greatest level of support for the student. Regardless of whether notification has occurred, the college's priority and obligation is to correspond and otherwise conduct business directly with students, and not through parents, guardians, or any other third party.

Q: What are the different types of hearing forums?

A:

1. **One on One Hearing:** A department member from Citizenship Education and/or the vice president of student development and dean of students will designate and train college officials who are authorized to serve as a hearing officer for One on One hearings. Hearing Officers may conduct hearings on any type of alleged violation of the Code and may impose any sanction that could range from written warning, housing contract

revocation/visitation revocation, suspension, or dismissal for findings of responsibility as appropriate.

2. **Hearing Boards:** Typically, student conduct hearing boards will bring several people together in an effort to allow for full consideration of an allegation that a student has violated the Code. The hearing participants may include the investigator, respondent(s), complainant(s), witnesses, and the members of the hearing forum, the hearing forum adviser, and a hearing support person for each respondent/complainant. The different forms of hearing boards are Community Council Boards, and Administrative Hearing Boards, and Sexual Misconduct Administrative Hearing Board. All decisions made by hearing boards are determined by majority vote.
 - a. **Community Council Hearing Board:** Community Council Boards are comprised of no less than three members from the student community. A student representative will serve as a chair for the hearing. All board members are provided with an initial training period (approximately six (6) hours), followed by weekly hearings to hear and review cases, make findings, and assign sanctions if appropriate. Community Council Board membership is open to any students who have achieved sophomore, junior, or senior standing, and have been enrolled at the college for at least two semesters. Typically, Community Council Hearing Boards will be referred cases of alleged Code violations that could result in sanctioning from a written warning to housing contract revocation/visitation revocation for findings of responsibility.

Board Adviser: Community Council Boards will also have a hearing board adviser. The hearing board adviser refers to a college official designated by the vice president of student development and dean of students to advise hearing board members, complainants, and respondents on procedural issues related to the hearing process and policies as outlined in the Code.

- b. **Administrative Hearing Board:** Administrative Hearing Board is comprised of no less than three members of the college community, two professional faculty/staff members of the college community and a minimum of one student. A professional staff/faculty member will serve as a chair for the hearing. All board members are provided with an initial training period (approximately six (6) hours), followed by hearings to hear and review cases, make findings, and assign sanctions as appropriate. Typically, Administrative Hearing Boards will be referred cases of alleged Code violations that could result in sanctioning from written warning, housing contract revocation/visitation revocation, suspension or dismissal for findings of responsibility.

Board Adviser: Administrative Hearing Boards will also have a hearing board adviser. The hearing board adviser refers to a college official designated by the vice president of student development and dean of students to advise hearing board members, complainants, and respondents on procedural issues related to the hearing process and policies as outlined in the Code.

- c. **Sexual Misconduct Administrative Hearing Board:** For questions or interest in Sexual Misconduct Administrative Hearing Boards, please refer to [sexual misconduct policies and procedures](#). Sexual Misconduct Administrative Hearing board is comprised of three professional faculty/staff members of the college community. A professional faculty/staff member will serve as a chair for the hearing. All board members are provided with an initial training period (approximately six (6) hours) to include an observation of a hearing, followed by meetings/hearings as needed hear cases, make findings, and assign appropriate sanctions. Sexual Misconduct Administrative Hearing Board members are also provided training specific to Title IX. Typically, Sexual Misconduct Administrative Hearing Boards will be referred cases of alleged Sexual Misconduct conduct violations that could result in sanctioning from warning, housing contract revocation/visitation revocation, suspension or dismissal for findings of responsibility.

Board Adviser: Sexual Misconduct Administrative Hearing Boards will also have a hearing board adviser. The hearing board adviser refers to a college official designated by the vice president of student development and dean of students to advise hearing board members, complainants, and respondents on procedural issues related to the hearing process and policies as outlined in the Code and sexual misconduct policy and procedures.

Q: What type of hearing forum will my student receive?

A: The type of hearing forum which a hearing is referred to depends on the severity of the alleged violation(s) and circumstances surrounding the alleged violation(s).

For more information regarding hearing forums please refer to **Hearing Forum section** as outlined in the [Code of Community Responsibility](#).

Q: What is my role throughout my students hearing process?

A: As a parent, guardian, and/or student advocate, your role is to help your student by being supportive while holding them accountable to your expectations and the college's expectations. You can also help identify and provide necessary interventions such as alcohol or drug evaluations and/or any others so that your student can be successful at Colby-Sawyer College. Allow and expect that your student to set necessary appointments with the appropriate departments to seek clarification about the hearing process or other area's throughout the Code etc., ensure your student attends meetings and completes any and all sanctions that may be assigned if your student is found responsible for violating college policies. It is not educationally beneficial for the student, or resolution of that matter, for parents to "take over" the process for the student. It is important to remember that the conduct process is designed for the student to learn and grow.

Q: What are sanctions?

A: Students who are found to be responsible for violating Colby-Sawyer College policy and/or procedure will be assigned appropriate sanctions based on the nature of the violation, the severity of the violation, the student's conduct history, and/or other criteria as determined by the hearing officer or hearing board. Sanctions are typically based on precedent set by other similar cases. However, since no two cases or students are exactly the same, sanctions may vary for seemingly similar incidents. Hearing officers and hearing board members have been trained to determine appropriate sanctions and do not frivolously assign sanctions. They take their jobs very seriously and seek to find education-based solutions to deter future problem behaviors and/or reconcile inappropriate behavior.

For a list of possible sanctions please refer to the **sanction section** that is outlined [Code of Community Responsibility](#).

Q: Can my student submit an appeal?

A: Yes, a student who has participated in the conduct hearing process may file an appeal that demonstrates appropriate basis for an appeal that is based on the student conduct hearing process (to include hearings with a hearing officer or hearing board). It is within a student's right to submit appeal.

In cases involving harming behaviors, endangering behaviors, and/or policy violations outlined in the sexual misconduct policy, *both* the Respondent(s) and Complainant(s) may file an appeal in accordance with this policy and process.

All appeals must demonstrate one or more of the following criteria and the student must explain in detail each basis of appeal:

- a. New information that was not available and/or known at the time of the hearing, which would likely have had a significant effect on the outcome of the hearing. This new information will be considered only if it is clear that the evidence could not have been known by the student(s) appealing at the time of the original hearing;
- b. Procedural error, in that the hearing was not conducted in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Colby-Sawyer College Code and the procedural error must have impaired a student's right to a fair hearing; and/or
- c. The severity of the sanction is not appropriate for the violation(s) committed, and the past student conduct history of the student (if applicable).

Information that **is not considered sufficient criteria for an appeal or a reasonable claim of an appeal**, by way of illustration, but not limitation, includes:

- a. Disagreement with the finding and/or sanction of a hearing body;
- b. Failure to appear at an appropriately scheduled hearing; and/or
- c. Failure to comply with a sanction.

For more specific information regarding the appeal process and steps to the student needs to take to submit an appeal please refer to the **Appeal section** as outline in the [Code of Community Responsibility](#).

Q: What does a sanction do to my student’s record?

A: The Department of Citizenship Education retains disciplinary records in accordance with the following.

1. If a student is found not responsible for a violation of the Code of Community Responsibility, the record pertaining to the disciplinary proceeding will be shredded when the student withdrawals or graduates from Colby-Sawyer College.
*Any findings of not responsible are only kept for the purpose of appropriate record maintenance only.
**Any findings of not responsible are not and will not be considered by any hearing officer or hearing board for any subsequent hearings that may occur.
2. Records of minor disciplinary action (e.g., warning letter, fines \$50 and under) are kept on file until the student withdraws or graduates.
3. Records of general disciplinary action (e.g., behavioral agreement, disciplinary probation, housing contract probation, and removal from housing) are kept on file for seven years.
4. Records of major disciplinary action (i.e., suspension, dismissal) are maintained permanently in the Department of Citizenship Education.

For more specific information regarding records maintenance please refer to the **Student Conduct Maintenance and Review section** as outlined in the [Code of Community Responsibility](#).

Q: Will conduct sanctions appear on my educational transcript?

A: Yes, depending on the sanction and the violation the student was found responsible for. As of August 15, 2016, any student conduct cases that result in a sanction of “suspension” will be noted on the student’s official transcript for as long as the “suspension” is in effect. Any cases that results in a sanction of “dismissal” will be noted on the student’s official transcript which is held with the college’s Registrar’s Office.

For more specific information regarding records maintenance please refer to the **Student Conduct Maintenance and Review section** as outlined in the [Code of Community Responsibility](#).

Q. My student was charged by the police. Why are they also being charged by the college for a Code Violation?

A: The college reserves the right to take action based on any student conduct, regardless of location, that is contrary to the pursuit of the educational mission of the college or that may adversely, distinctly or directly affect the college community. Therefore, it is possible for

students involved in the student conduct process to also be involved in a separate, legal process.

While many of the college standards of conduct parallel the laws of society in general, the college sets standards that are higher and more stringent than those found elsewhere in society. The purpose of our conduct process is to reinforce and encourage the development of good decision-making and personal integrity and to teach these skills where they are lacking. It is the college's goal that your student make his/her way through any aspect of the conduct process, your student will leave that process as a better educated student, a better member of the college community, and a better global citizen.

For more specific information regarding the college's **Jurisdiction of Colby-Sawyer College section** and the **Student Conduct Process and Procedures section** as outlined in the [Code of Community Responsibility](#).

Q: My student would never do anything like this so why is he/she being charged?

A: For some students, college is a time of exploration, experimentation, and testing. They may be in a period of transition from late adolescence to adulthood. They may also be away from home and the daily influence of their parents for the first time. As students are testing the beliefs and values they learned at home, some may make choices that are inconsistent with these values. Such testing is a normal part of the developmental process. However, students must also learn that the choices they make may not be healthy and may have consequences. The conduct system is designed to educate and assist students with these choices and help them make appropriate decisions.

If you have reviewed the Code and you find that you have additional questions about the contents of this document, please contact the Department of Citizenship Education at citizenship@colby-sawyer.edu. If you would like to speak to someone from the Department of Citizenship Education concerning the student conduct process please e-mail your contact number and a date and time that you will be available to talk.

Thank you.