

# STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students, as members of the River Parishes Community College (RPCC) community, are expected to always conduct themselves in a manner that reflects respect for themselves, the rights of others, and an appreciation of a diverse population.

Behavior that interferes with the learning process, is discriminatory, or is derogatory in nature will not be tolerated. Students should understand and exercise their rights, meet their responsibilities, and allow other students to enjoy the same privileges. The College maintains an academic environment for all without denying opportunities to any and being unfamiliar with RPCC policies and procedures does not excuse a student from acting irresponsibly. In an educational environment, each instructor is responsible for maintaining a classroom climate that supports student learning. Instructors have the authority to temporarily dismiss from class any student whose behavior disrupts this environment or interferes with the rights of others to learn. Instructors are expected to communicate class rules and notify students when their behavior violates those expectations. In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, the Dean of Students or a designated representative has the authority to investigate the incident and determine whether the student may return to class. As part of this process, the Dean may require a mediated session, supporting documentation from a medical professional, or other appropriate conditions before the student is cleared to return. Extended or permanent exclusion from the classroom can be achieved only through appropriate procedures of the College.

The Chancellor or his designated representative may suspend or expel a student for violation of school rules or for conduct that is disruptive of the educational process. The disciplinary action shall be taken in accordance with the procedure provided for in this section.

## Off-Campus Conduct

When a student is alleged to have violated River Parishes Community College's Code of Student Conduct by an offense committed off the college premises, the College reserves the right to investigate and adjudicate. All students enrolled in RPCC should clearly understand that the college is expressly concerned with student conduct both on and off campus. RPCC expects the behavior of its students, at all times and in all settings, to be guided by the same standards that define acceptable forms of student conduct. To this end, any student enrolled at RPCC who is found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct or state or federal laws, even in an off-campus setting, is subject to administrative disciplinary procedures that could result in one or a combination of several disciplinary sanctions as listed in this section. Based on the reasonable belief that a student has been involved in conduct off campus incompatible with the college's function as an educational institution or with the mission of River Parishes Community College, the Dean of Students, in his/her discretion, may invoke the disciplinary process.

## Standards of Student Conduct

By accepting admission to River Parishes Community College, the student accepts the responsibility to conform to all regulations that the College has established. Any student who fails to meet this responsibility, whether on or off campus, shall be subject to disciplinary sanction, including, but not limited to, expulsion, suspension, probation, warning, or the imposition of reasonable fines.

Students are responsible for knowing and obeying the college rules, as well as local, state and federal laws. Consistent with U.S. Department

of Education Title IX standards, and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 and the Campus SaVE Act, River Parishes Community College uses a wide array of evidence standards to determine whether a code violation is more likely than not to have occurred.

The Office of Student Affairs will make reasonable efforts to make regulations available, but students are responsible for becoming familiar with such regulations and are held accountable for misconduct even in the absence of such familiarity.

Specific examples of misconduct/unacceptable behavior in which students may be subject to disciplinary action include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Committing a criminal act under federal, state, or municipal law, or supporting or assisting with the violation of any of those laws on or off campus
2. Violating any college policy, procedure, rule or regulation.
3. Failure to identify oneself to a college official or provide appropriate ID upon request or falsifying one's identity to an officer of the law or college official.
4. Failing to obey, or lying to, a college official or officer of the law who is performing his/her duties.
5. Participating in repetitive offenses and/or failing to fulfill all probationary requirements.
6. Misusing any fire equipment or other life-safety equipment on or off college property.
7. Use or possession of ammunition, firearms or other weapons, including, but not limited to, guns, BB guns, bows, arrows, knives, brass knuckles, or other device used as a weapon or ammunition on college property.
8. Behaving in a manner that significantly endangers the health or safety of other people, including members of the college community and visitors on or off campus. This includes but is not limited to hazing or voluntarily submitting to hazing, or any participation or support thereof.
9. Stealing, destroying, defacing, damaging or misusing college property or property belonging to others and/or participating as an accessory in such activity.
10. Inflicting, threat or inciting bodily harm while on or off college property: a. infliction of bodily harm upon any person; b. any act that contributes to the risk of bodily harm to a person, and which includes but is not limited to physical or sexual assaults or threats thereof.
11. Using, possessing, or distributing intoxicating beverages or substances, in any college building or facility, or other public area or supporting or assisting with such possession, including paraphernalia thereof (e.g., empty alcohol containers, empty pill or DXM/liquid containers).
12. Use of any tobacco products or other related devices (e.g., cigarettes, pipes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, vapor devices) is prohibited in college buildings and on college grounds, including parking areas and structures, sidewalks, walkways, or college owned buildings.
13. Gambling in any form including but not limited to on looking or conspiracy on college property.
14. The possession, use, manufacture, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs, controlled substances, or related paraphernalia is strictly prohibited. This includes any items associated with the preparation or consumption of such substances. Students are also prohibited from knowingly being in the presence of, or assisting in, the use or possession of illegal drugs or drug-related items.

15. Bribery, forgery, alteration, misuse of college documents, records or identification cards as well as misuse and/or abuse of services such as financial assistance, arranged accommodations/modifications and academic assistance provided by the college.
16. Possession of or setting off any explosive devices, fireworks or flammable liquid or object on college property.
17. Failing to respond to an official summons from an administrative officer of the college within the time indicated.
18. Harassing, bullying, intimidation, or stalking made either in person, or by telephone, writing or computer.
19. Hate-Crime - Committing or attempting to commit an offense against a person or group based on perceived or actual characteristics such as race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation is strictly prohibited.
20. Any act that contributes to the sexual harassment, discrimination, or assault of another person on or off campus. This includes intimate partner or domestic/dating violence or harassment.
21. Involvement in any act or statement that provides a terroristic threat made in person, on paper, by phone or through other electronic means that contributes to or suggests endangerment toward a person(s) and/or to the physical property of others, including but not limited to that of River Parishes Community College.
22. Obstructing or disrupting any college activity, including teaching, research, social activities and public service functions.
23. Engaging in any obscene, profane, slanderous, reckless, destructive or unlawful course of conduct.
24. Creating a nuisance with noise through talking, yelling, singing, playing a musical instrument, stereo, radio or through other means in a way that is sufficiently loud enough to disturb other members of the college community.
25. Theft, misuse, or abuse of college computing resources—including unauthorized access and copyright infringement—is strictly prohibited. Such actions may result in disciplinary sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct and may carry serious civil or criminal penalties under federal law.

Copyright infringement, including illegal downloading or unauthorized file sharing, may result in civil penalties of up to **\$150,000 per violation** and criminal penalties of up to **five years in prison and \$250,000 in fines**. For more information, refer to RPCC's Copyright Infringement and Sanctions Policy (<https://www.rpcc.edu/student-services/copyright-infringement-and-sanctions/>).

This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Gaining unauthorized access to files or systems, including reading, altering, or using information without authorization.
  - b. Using another individual's login credentials or transferring files without authorization.
  - c. Transmitting or accessing obscene, abusive, pornographic, or otherwise inappropriate content using college systems.
26. Creating a distraction or disruption to the learning environment through appearance, clothing, accessories, body decorations, or other items is prohibited. This includes anything considered obscene, offensive, gang-related, or otherwise inappropriate for an educational setting, as determined by college officials.
  27. Obstructing an investigation (e.g., falsifying a report of an incident).
  28. Participating in illegal or unsanctioned solicitation on or off the premises of River Parishes Community College.

29. Loitering or participating in any unapproved, unsanctioned physical presence within a facility or property boundaries of which are owned, maintained, operated, or utilized by River Parishes Community College.

\*While plagiarism/academic dishonesty is no longer listed within this section of the Student Code of Conduct, it remains a violation of college policy. Disciplinary action for this infraction is managed by the Office of Academic Affairs in accordance with established academic policies and procedures.

## Student Rights

- The right to expect a quality education.
- The right to develop their potential to the best of their ability.
- The right to inquire about and to recommend improvements in policies, regulations, and procedures affecting the welfare of students. This right is best exercised using appropriate channels provided by the SGA and campus officials.
- The right to a fair hearing and appeal when a disciplinary action is applied to them as an individual or as a group member.

## Student Responsibilities

- Students are responsible for understanding and complying with all regulations outlined in the College Catalog, Student Handbook, and other official publications to support a respectful and productive academic environment.
- Students should recognize that their behavior reflects not only on themselves but also on the college, its faculty and staff, and their fellow students.
- Students are expected to demonstrate common decency and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with that of a responsible and mature individual.
- Students are accountable for the consequences of their actions, especially when those actions negatively impact themselves, others, the college community, or society at large.

## Violation of the Student Code of Conduct

A sincere attempt should be made to resolve all student complaints through open and respectful communication. RPCC encourages all members of the college community to address concerns directly with the individuals involved whenever possible and appropriate. If informal resolution is unsuccessful, any faculty member, staff member, or student may file a formal complaint against a student by submitting the Violation of Student Code of Conduct Report Form (<https://rpcc.jotform.com/221023951026141/>).

A student charged with a violation of the Code of Conduct will retain all college rights until due process is completed, unless there is evidence that the student:

- has been convicted of a felony;
- has been formally charged with the commission of a felony of such nature that the student's presence on campus is potentially dangerous to the health and safety of the college;
- has engaged in any activity of such nature that their presence on campus is potentially dangerous to the health and safety of the

college, whether or not civil charges have been made, or penalties imposed.

In the above situations, the student may be temporarily barred from the campus until due process is completed.

The Dean of Students, or his/her designee, will review the complaint, investigate, and gather evidence. If a violation is determined, any of the following sanctions may be applied:

- Reprimand - Official warning in writing that continuation or repetition of violation or inappropriate behavior may result in a more severe sanction.
- Suspension - A temporary termination of student status at RPCC for a minimum of one academic year. During the suspension period, the student is prohibited from enrolling in courses or participating in any RPCC-sponsored events or activities on any campus.
- Dismissal - Termination of student status at RPCC indefinitely. This action will be noted on the student's transcript. Dismissed students are not permitted to enroll in courses or participate in any RPCC-sponsored events or activities on any campus.

The above sanctions do not preclude other disciplinary actions that may be deemed warranted by the college.

If the student disagrees with the final decision and/or sanctions imposed by the Dean of Students, the student has the right to appeal to the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. The appeal must be submitted to the Associate Vice Chancellor's Office within 3 business days of being informed of the decision.