



Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy

Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) is committed to maintaining a working, learning, and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all the staff, faculty, and students of the University community are respected. The policy provides the Office of Student Affairs to assess the allegations of bullying to determine if it falls within its definition of bullying, and is sufficiently supported by credible and specific facts to warrant the initiation of informal or formal complaint resolution procedures as stated in the Grievance Policy. The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) is committed to preventing and proactively addressing bullying at PHSU.

Policy:

Under this University policy, bullying is prohibited. Bullying is defined as the conduct of any sort directed at another that is severe, pervasive, or persistent. It is of a nature that causes a reasonable person in the victim's position substantial emotional distress and undermines their ability to work, study or participate in their regular life activities.

This policy is not intended to and will not be applied in a way that would violate rights to academic freedom and freedom of expression, nor will it be interpreted in a way that undermines a supervisor's authority to appropriately manage their work unit. This definition reserves to the University, in furtherance of its educational mission, the right to address conduct that would not necessarily be unlawful. It is not intended to create individual or group rights, whether contractual or otherwise, that do not exist under law.

Procedure:

Prior to filing a complaint:

Bullying is a form of incivility that progresses and increases in severity over time. Before filing a bullying complaint, you may contact the Office of Student Affairs at studentcomplaints@psm.edu. The VP of Student Affairs or its designee will listen to your concerns, help you identify the type of conflict occurring, discuss options for informal resolution, and refer you to more formal options when you are ready.

Filing a complaint:

Alleged violations of the bullying policy should be communicated to the Office of Student Affairs. Any allegation of bullying made to the OSA must be made in writing and include specific examples of conduct directed at the victim, specific examples of substantial emotional distress caused by the conduct, and specific examples of how the victim's work, life, or study was

impacted by the conduct. The complaint should be filed within 60 days of the last alleged harmful act.

Upon receiving a written allegation of bullying, the Office of Student Affairs will assess the allegation to determine if the alleged misconduct falls within its definition of bullying and is sufficiently supported by credible and specific facts to warrant the initiation of informal or formal complaint resolution procedures. The policy doesn't prohibit, for example, conduct that might be rude or inconsiderate but is not severe, pervasive or persistent. However, such conduct could fall short of reasonable expectations for behavior toward others and be addressed under the Professionalism or Interpersonal Abuse policies.

The Office of Student Affairs reserves exclusive discretion to decide whether, after the initial assessment, an allegation of bullying warrants the initiation of formal or informal complaint resolution procedures.

Concerns and questions about possible violations can be communicated to the Office of Student Affairs for consultation.

Additional Resources:

Staff or faculty members may contact the Office of Human Resources to address concerns of incivility. They will refer the consult to a representative to help triage the best avenue to process the concerns and are available to work with all parties involved.

The Office of Student Affairs is available at studentaffairs@psm.edu or (787) 840-2575 ext. 5723/ 5782 to answer questions and receive complaints about student conduct, including bullying behaviors.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies (for example, cellular phones, digital cameras, computers and PDAs) for the purpose of engaging in deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group with the intention of harming others. Cyberbullying may include cyber harassment, cyberstalking, and the invasion of privacy, all of which constitute violations of the Student Honor Code and the Interpersonal Abuse Policy. Cyberbullying can cause significant harm to students, including loss of reputation, humiliation and embarrassment, clinical depression, fear, anxiety, loss of self-esteem, and even self-injurious and suicidal behavior.

Cyberbullying in any form will not be tolerated, and any student found responsible for engaging in cyberbullying will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, which may result in suspension or permanent separation or dismissal

from Ponce Health Sciences University. If a case of cyberbullying is determined to be of a criminal nature, it will be referred to local authorities in addition to being adjudicated as a Code of Conduct violation. Cyberbullying is inconsistent with the Mission of PHSU and unacceptable for any member of the Iona Community to harass another for personal reasons and/or based on their race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion.

Complaints of cyberbullying must be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs using the Grievance Policy Procedure. The Office of Student Affairs will collaborate with the IT Office to evaluate and analyze cyberbullying cases.

Amendments:

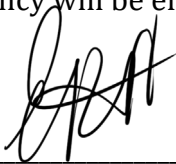
PHSU reserves the right to review this policy when necessary and make the corresponding changes. Any changes to the Policy will be posted to the entire community by the official communication means of the Institution.

Violations of this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Repeal and Validity:

This policy does not repeal the provisions established by other university policies and or governmental agencies' regulations but establishes the requirements of PHSU

This policy will be effective for the Academic Year 2023-2024.



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