

Disruption Defined

Disruptive behavior is behavior that interferes with the learning and teaching environment and/or the administrative student services function of the college. Some examples of disruptive behaviors include:

- Refusal to comply with faculty or staff
- Challenges to authority
- Actions that distract the class from the subject matter and/or discussion
- Continually and persistently speaking without being recognized in the classroom or in the office
- Repeatedly leaving and entering the classroom without authorization while class is in session
- Loud, distracting, or erratic behavior inappropriate to the setting
- Answering cell phones or allowing them to continuously ring in class, or in the office
- Overt hostility, defiance, or insults on the Learning Management System and email
- Excessive e-mails, phone calls, and other means of communication demanding attention outside of class times or business hours

Not only may these behaviors be disruptive, they may also be violations of the Code of Student Conduct. Accurately documenting and referring students will then be appropriate in order to hold students accountable for their actions.

You can find the Code of Student Conduct at <http://www.tstc.edu/harlingenstudentdev/stucoco>. Violators will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action depending on the severity of the violation, including loss of information resource access privileges and suspension from the college.

Texas State Technical College (TSTC) is committed to providing the best undergraduate educational experience in the state of Texas, strong student support, and operational effectiveness and service to its constituents. Additionally, TSTC promises to provide a supportive environment where all students can successfully learn and grow. On occasion, there are students who disrupt that environment through their behaviors

Resources

Cathy Maples,
Vice President for Student Development
Consolidated Student Services Building (EK),
Room 208
Ph: 956-364-4300 csmaples@tstc.edu
www.tstc.edu/harlingenstudentdev

TSTC Police Department
Public Safety Building (A)
Ph: 956-364-4220
Emergency: 956-364-4911 or Ext. 4911
www.tstc.edu/harlingenpolice



Responding to
Disruptive
Student Behavior

Referring Students

If students exhibit disruptive, harmful, or threatening behavior, they are potentially violating the Code of Student Conduct and, in order to most effectively hold them accountable to the Code, they should be referred to the office of the Vice President for Student Development. If the behavior is severe enough and the danger is immediate, please **contact the Police by calling 956-364-4911 or extension 4911.**

If you are unsure if the behavior is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct, the Vice President for Student Development is always willing to assist by coaching any faculty or staff member through this process or coming up with ways to address the behavior before referring students. Please do not hesitate to contact the Vice President at 956-364-4300 to discuss.

Proper and appropriate documentation will be helpful throughout this process. Without much time passing, please write a statement that includes as much detail as possible regarding the student, the offending behavior, witnesses, location, time, date, and your response. That documentation may prove critical throughout the process which makes its accuracy and thoroughness of great importance. You may also report disruptive behavior by completing the Incident Report Form at www.tstc.edu/harlingenbit/incidentreport

You can reach the Vice President for Student Development at 956-364-4300, email at csmuples@tstc.edu or in the Consolidated Student Services Building, Room 208.

Responding to Disruptions

In an effort to quickly and effectively put an end to disruptions, promptly and privately address students regarding their behavior. Approach that conversation with a calm, courteous, and direct manner before the disruptive behavior has the chance to escalate. There will be times when the situation can be diffused by offering to speak outside of the office/classroom. The conversation should include an opportunity for the student to be heard as well as an opportunity for the staff/faculty to effectively draw boundaries, guidelines, and expectations.

If the disruptions are not happening face-to-face (i.e. e-mail, over the phone, etc.), contact the student to set up a time where his or her concerns may be heard as well as behavioral expectations established. The Vice President for Student Development is more than willing to be present during any meetings to help both the instructor and the student.

Depending on the details of the disruption (i.e. severity, accompanying behaviors, recurrence, etc.), it may be pertinent to document the situation and refer the student to the office of the Vice President for Student Development. Please do not hesitate to contact her office even if you want to discuss and not report anything. It is much better for her to assist you through the process than to wait to the point you want the student removed from class and she may not be able to.

Proactive Prevention

In many situations involving disruptive students, it is learned the students had exhibited other disruptive behaviors across campus in other offices, departments, or residential facilities. Those initial signs and examples of disruptive behavior had been overlooked or ignored and eventually the students increase the severity of their disruption. Those early incidents may have been overlooked for various reasons including fear of retaliation, downplay of seriousness, or uncertainty of outcomes. With appropriate notification and

referral, the behavior can be addressed before it has a chance to escalate. The disruptive behavior cannot be expected to change without informing the student of clear expectations for behavior. Sometimes it is helpful for the Vice President for Student Development to have a conversation with the student to let him/her know why the inappropriate behavior is unacceptable.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) protects the privacy of students' educational records. The disciplinary/conduct record of students is considered part of their educational record and, thus, is protected by FERPA. Any information gathered and documented while speaking with the disruptive student or involving disruptive behavior should be handled in a confidential matter. This should not be a deterrent to talking with a student about your concerns nor should it be a deterrent to discussing with the Vice President for Student Development. Referring a student to an appropriate resource or the Vice President for Student Development is not a violation of FERPA.

Other Pertinent Information

Stressful times for students

- The start and end of semesters
- Mid-semester (mid-term exams)
- Finals Week

Stressful issues for students

- Financial problems
- Legal problems
- Increases in assignments, exams, workload, etc.
- Family issues such as divorce or a death in the family
- Health problems
- Going home for holidays and breaks
- Roommate and relationship conflicts

Tips when you are concerned

- Speak with them and tell them you are concerned
- Be familiar with and understand campus resources
- Ask questions and genuinely engage with the student
- Know your limits and refer when appropriate