

DAMBAI COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



STUDENT DISCIPLINARY POLICY

DACE/SDPP001/2020

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STUDENT DISCIPLINARY POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The College has the mandate to train effective pre-tertiary teachers for the country and beyond. In order to achieve this mandate, there must be discipline among student teachers in all facets of their academic and non-academic lives. There must therefore be a policy to regulate the conduct of student teachers of the College.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The College is part of the local community and is also a community on its own. As a community of individuals with different values, beliefs and aspirations, student teachers of the College have the responsibility to ensure their behaviour does not negatively impact on others. All student teachers are expected to conduct themselves with due regards for the College's reputation. Student teachers are expected to ensure that their interactions with other student teachers, staff and their dependants, are conducted with respect, having due regards for the rights, privacy and property of others. Student teachers are required to comply with the College's rules, regulations, policies, procedures and codes of practice at all times. The student teachers' Disciplinary Policy and Procedure set out here is intended to provide a clear and impartial processes for dealing with allegations relating to student discipline or behaviour. Generally, the policy aims to provide an environment where there are no barriers to student teacher's success and academic performance. If a student teacher's behaviour infringes others' rights and freedom, then this may result in disciplinary action. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all instances of student teacher's misconducts are dealt with expeditiously, fairly, consistently and promptly.

3. PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to set out guidelines for ensuring utmost discipline among student teachers in the College for conducive academic environment.

The objectives are to:

- a. ensure fairness in dealing with disciplinary issues among student teachers

- b. set out guidelines for student teachers' discipline
- c. ensure gender responsiveness in dealing with matters of discipline among student teachers.
- d. not to compromise discipline on grounds of religious, political and ethnic affiliation and or sentiments.

4. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- i. This policy shall apply to all student teachers of the College.
- ii. The student disciplinary policy applies to all student teachers of the College when they are under the jurisdiction within and outside the College.

5. SUPPORTING PROCEDURES

A. Misconduct

Misconduct under this policy is defined as unacceptable or improper behaviour especially of a student teacher. The College has a defined system of two levels of misconduct: minor and gross misconduct.

i. Minor Misconduct

Minor misconduct is considered to be a single incident of misconduct of a type which is not serious enough to constitute Gross Misconduct under this policy. Examples of Minor Misconduct are given below:

- Misbehaviour committed in a virtual environment; for example, social media
- Anti-social behaviours such as noise, abuse of alcohol (intoxication), smoking/sniffing of tobacco in the College premises or in the community which causes disturbance to other individuals.
- Failure to follow reasonable instructions or directives of College authority in the best interests of the student teacher or other individuals.
- Insulting behaviour towards other individuals or group of people
- Failure to attend lectures and College gatherings without permission.
- Behaviours which are disruptive to staff, their dependants and/or student teachers.

- Rudeness, inconsiderate behaviour towards staff, dependants of staff, visitors, other workers of the College and other student teachers.
- Failure to follow lawful instruction from the College staff.
- Unfair treatment of other individuals or groups of individuals.

ii. Gross Misconduct

Gross Misconduct is any unacceptable or improper behaviour of a very serious kind. It is a conduct that is sufficiently serious and causes the College to lose trust and confidence in the student teachers' ability to fulfil their obligations as student teachers and be responsible members of the College community. Examples of Gross Misconduct are given below and can include behaviour committed in a virtual environment (for example, social media) as well as in person:

- Cheating and plagiarism – copying from other student teachers' work, and other sources without acknowledgement.
- Physical or sexual assault/harassment.
- Threats to life and property of the College and its members and ethnocentric comments.
- Conducts which constitute criminal offences as per the criminal code of Ghana (Act 29, 1960).
- Infringement of College regulations relating to College premises or action likely to put the safety or well-being of others at risk.
- Infringement of College data protection regulations e.g. hacking into College data system, using College data to view pornographic materials, cyber fraud etc.
- Theft, fraud or deliberate falsification of records.
- Causing material damage to both private and College property with or without malicious intent.
- Unlawful possession/use of banned substances or intent to supply banned substances to members of the College community.
- Inappropriate behaviour resulting from the use of banned substances or drugs.
- Unlawful possession of or an unlawful intent to supply offensive weapon or firearms to any member of the College community.
- Any action(s) which are likely to bring the name of the College into disrepute or disrupt the normal running of the College.

- Action(s) which attempt(s) to prevent others from exercising their rights and freedom.
- Failure to disclose important and relevant information for the safety of the College.
- Disruption or improper interference with the academic, administrative, sporting, social or other activities of the College, whether on College premises or elsewhere.
- Get involved in writing and circulating or publishing in print or electronic form anonymous letters, posters, notices, sign or any publication that threatens the peace and security of the College.
- Obstruction, or improper interference with the legitimate functions, duties or activities of any student teacher, members of staff, their dependants or other employees of the College or any authorised visitor to the College.
- Bribing or attempting to bribe any member of the College community and engaging in corruptible activities.
- Refusal to participate in a disciplinary process or observe penalty imposed following a disciplinary hearing without official notice.
- Unlawful demonstration or procession.
- Any other misconduct that may constitute gross misconduct.

B. Criminal or Civil Offences

- i. Any member of staff and their dependants, student teachers, and other members of the College community may report an allegation of misconduct.
- ii. All allegations must be made initially through the Dean of Students.
- iii. Where a complaint of misconduct has been made, the Dean of Students may determine that the complaint should not be the subject of further action under laid down procedure as it does not warrant investigation, or may be covered by another procedure.
- iv. If the complainant is not satisfied, he/she can continue to launch formal complaint to the College Secretary.
- v. The Dean of Students can as well refer a complaint to the College Secretary if he/she feels it is beyond his/her jurisdiction
- vi. The College shall report any suspected criminal offences to the Police. Where a student teacher wishes to initiate any civil case against any student teacher or staff and other

member(s) of the College community, that student teacher must exhaust all the channels of redress in the College.

- vii. Where alleged misconduct also constitutes an offence under the criminal law, special provisions will apply and the College's own disciplinary investigations or proceedings may be delayed until such time as the police and or courts have completed their investigations and proceedings.
- viii. A student teacher against whom a criminal charge is pending or who is the subject of a police investigation, may not be suspended until the outcome of that investigation or trial is known.
- ix. Where criminal proceedings are concluded against a student teacher with no charges being brought, or the student teacher being acquitted by the court, the College will take this into account in the application of its own disciplinary process under the Gross Misconduct procedure.
- x. Where a conviction of a court of competent jurisdiction is pronounced (including any caution, bind-over, reprimand or other criminal penalty(ies) against a student teacher, the College will proceed to apply the sanctions under the Gross Misconduct.

6. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

The College shall observe the following principles in all disciplinary matters:

- A) All disciplinary matters shall be treated with due confidentiality.
- B) Departmental/unit heads shall initially attempt to resolve minor disciplinary issues through an informal procedure.
- C) The College shall make every effort to deal with disciplinary allegations as quickly as possible, at the appropriate management level.
- D) No disciplinary action shall be taken before a case is fully investigated and, until a Disciplinary Hearing has taken place.
- E) Except in cases of gross misconduct, student teachers shall **not** be suspended or dismissed for a first disciplinary offence.

- F) At every stage in the Disciplinary Procedure, student teachers shall be written to informing them about the allegations against them. Student teachers also have the opportunity to respond before any decision is taken.
- G) Student teachers shall be provided with evidence gathered through the investigation before any Disciplinary Hearing. This shall include any statements by third parties and records of interviews.
- H) The appointment of the Chair of a Hearing or a Panel, shall always be subject to avoiding current and potential conflicts of interest.
- I) When the formal Disciplinary Procedure has commenced, student teachers shall be reminded of the support available from the Counselling Unit

7. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

A. Minor Misconduct

Depending on where and what offences it may be, minor offences may be reported to:

- Heads of Departments
- The Dean of Students
- Heads of Units
- Academic Counsellors
- Hall Tutors

Where appropriate, minor instances of misconduct may be dealt with informally through the provision of advice, counselling, coaching or training. Under these circumstances, any recognised College authority is responsible for bringing the matter to the student's attention and discussing it with them after it has been reported or identified. The student teachers should be clearly advised of the specific standard of behaviour expected of them, and should be warned that if there is no improvement, they may be subjected to formal disciplinary action in the future.

If there are any actions arising from this discussion, authority shall confirm them in writing to the student teacher, setting out any agreed objectives, expectations and timescales.

B. The Formal Disciplinary Procedure

More serious misconducts or allegations of misconduct or repeated allegations of minor breaches shall be dealt with under the formal Disciplinary Procedure by the disciplinary and mediation committee.

There are three stages to the Formal Disciplinary Procedure: -

Stage 1 – Investigation: This involves an investigation into the alleged misconduct to establish whether there is a case to answer.

Stage 2 – Hearing: This involves a Disciplinary Hearing with the student teacher (culprit). A decision shall be taken following a hearing as to whether any disciplinary action is necessary, and if so, the appropriate action shall be taken.

Stage 3 - Sanctions

Sanctions that may be imposed on the culprit by the committee depending on the gravity of the offence shall include but not limited to:

- apology (verbal or written)
- signing of a bond to be of good behaviour
- relief of post (if any)
- lost of residential status
- fine/replacement
- suspension
- dismissal
- referral to the appropriate law enforcement body

C. Responsibility for Implementation

- The Disciplinary Committee
- The Grievance and Mediation Committee

The composition of the committee that sits for a hearing in relation to status, rank and position is clearly spelt out in the harmonized statutes for Colleges of Education (SCHEDULE D: D2-D5. Pg. 56 - 61)

8. APPEAL AGAINST DISCIPLINARY ACTION

In a situation where the complainant or the alleged offender is not satisfied with the outcome of the committee's recommendations and for that matter the sanctions, she/he can appeal for a redress in not less than seven working days in writing, to the College Secretary. The student's letter must set out the grounds of their appeal and provide new evidence, where appropriate. The chairman of the committee shall ensure a review of the case in not less than fourteen (14) working days.

9. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT TEACHERS DURING THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES

- a. Staff are required to act impartially and ensure that student teachers fully understand why they have been subjected to the disciplinary process.
- b. Student teachers must be given a chance to put forward their case and be told what will happen next.
- c. The student teachers can expect to be supported by their tutors and or by their hall tutors to address any underlying problems and be referred to for additional/external support as appropriate.
- d. Where the student teacher is issued with a final written warning, the student teacher must sign a bond to be of good behaviour. This shall be closely monitored to ensure that the conditions of the warning are met. Failure to comply with the terms of the bond shall trigger the student teacher's dismissal.
- e. Staff from the Guidance and Counselling Unit, Gender Desk and those of student teachers' services shall be available to support student teachers through the disciplinary process and can refer student teachers to other agencies for support.
- f. Where a student teacher has a learning difficulty or disability, and has a formally agreed upon support plan, the College shall ensure that the student teacher's needs are taken into consideration. This may result in reasonable adjustments to the disciplinary process, but will not automatically remove the need for disciplinary action.

- g. The exception to making contact with a parent/guardian will be allowed where the College is aware of a safeguarding matter, and where there are strong indications that it would not be in the student teacher's best interest to involve the parent/guardian.

10. MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- a. The Governing Council
- b. The Management of the College

11. STATUS

Approved

12. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- a. The Governing Council
- b. The Management of the College
- c. The Staff
- d. Students of the College

13. APPROVAL BODY

The Governing Council of the College.

14. EFFECTIVE DATE

16th September, 2020.

15. REVIEW

2023

16. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information or enquires regarding this policy, please contact the following:

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