

Code of Ethics for Nursing Students

Revised 2001

The following Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct was proposed and adopted by National Student Nurses' Association, Inc. at their 49th Annual Convention in Nashville, TN.

Preamble

Students of nursing have a responsibility to society in learning the academic theory and clinical skills needed to provide nursing care. The clinical setting presents unique challenges and responsibilities while caring for human beings in a variety of health care environments.

The Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct is based on an understanding that to practice nursing as a student is an agreement to uphold the trust with which society has placed in us. The statements of the Code provide guidance for the nursing student in the personal development of an ethical foundation and need not be limited strictly to the academic or clinical environment but can assist in the holistic development of the person.

A Code for Nursing Students

As students are involved in the clinical and academic environments we believe that ethical principles are a necessary guide to professional development. Therefore within these environments we:

- Advocate for the rights of all clients.
- Maintain client confidentiality.
- Take appropriate action to ensure the safety of clients, self, and others.
- Provide care for the client in a timely, compassionate and professional manner.
- Communicate client care in a truthful, timely and accurate manner.
- Actively promote the highest level of moral and ethical principles and accept responsibility for our actions.
- Promote excellence in nursing by encouraging lifelong learning and professional development.
- Treat others with respect and promote an environment that respects human rights, values and choice of cultural and spiritual beliefs.

- Collaborate in every reasonable manner with the academic faculty and clinical staff to ensure the highest quality of client care.
- Use every opportunity to improve faculty and clinical staff understanding of the learning needs of nursing students.
- Encourage faculty, clinical staff, and peers to mentor nursing students.
- Refrain from performing any technique or procedure for which the student has not been adequately trained.
- Refrain from any deliberate action or omission of care in the academic or clinical setting that creates unnecessary risk of injury to the client, self, or others.
- Assist the staff nurse or preceptor in ensuring that there is full disclosure and that proper authorizations are obtained from clients regarding any form of treatment or research.
- Abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages or any substances in the academic and clinical setting that impair judgment.
- Strive to achieve and maintain an optimal level of personal health.
- Support access to treatment and rehabilitation for students who are experiencing impairments related to substance abuse and mental or physical health issues.
- Uphold school policies and regulations related to academic and clinical performance, reserving the right to challenge and critique rules and regulations as per school grievance policy.

Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

- Students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and engage in a sustained and independent search for truth.
- The freedom to teach and the freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom: students should exercise their freedom with responsibility.
- Each institution has a duty to develop policies and procedures which provide and safeguard the students' freedom to learn.

- Under no circumstances should students be barred from admission to a particular institution on the basis of race, creed, sex, color, national origin, disability, or marital status.
- Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.
- Students should have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation, but they are responsible for maintaining standards or academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.
- Information about student views, beliefs, and political associations that instructors acquire in the course of their work should be considered confidential and not released without the knowledge or consent of the student.
- The student should have the right to have a responsible voice in the determination of his/her curriculum.
- Institutions should have a carefully considered policy as to the information that should be a part of a student's permanent educational record and as to the conditions of this disclosure.
- Students and student organizations should be free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them, and to express opinions publicly and privately.
- Students should be allowed to invite and to hear any person of their own choosing, thereby taking the responsibility of furthering their education.
- The student body should have clearly defined means to participate in the formulation and application of institutional policy affecting academic and student affairs.
- The institution has an obligation to clarify those standards of behavior that it considers essential to its educational mission and its community life.
- Disciplinary proceedings should be instituted only for violations of standards of conduct formulated with significant student participation and published in advance through such means as a student handbook or a generally available body of institutional regulations. It is the responsibility of the student to know these regulations. Grievance procedures should be available for every student.

- As citizens and members to an academic community, students are subject to the obligations that accrue them by virtue of this membership and should enjoy the same freedoms of citizenship.
- Students have the right to belong or refuse to belong to any organization of their choice.
- Students have the right to personal privacy in their living space to the extent that the welfare of others is respected.
- Adequate safety precautions should be provided by Schools of Nursing, for example, to and from student dorms, adequate street lighting, locks, etc.
- Dress code, if present in school, should be established by student government in conjunction with the school director and faculty, so the highest professional standards possible are maintained, but also taking into consideration points of comfort and practicality for the student.
- Grading systems should be carefully reviewed periodically with students and faculty for clarification and better student-faculty understanding.

The Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Students of Nursing. National Student Nurses' Association, New York, 1978.