

**Community College of Philadelphia  
Proposed College Policy**

**INVOLUNTARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The Community College of Philadelphia may place a student on an involuntary leave of absence for reasons of personal or community safety.

**PURPOSE**

The College is committed to protecting its community members from the risk of physical harm and preserving the integrity of its learning environment. Separation of a student from the College and its facilities may be necessary if there is evidence that the student is engaging in or is likely to engage in behavior that either poses a danger of harm to self or others, or disrupts the learning environment of others.

This policy is meant to be invoked in circumstances when a student is unable or unwilling to request a voluntary leave of absence, and such a leave may be necessary to protect the safety of that student and/or others or the integrity of the College's learning environment. In addition, an involuntary leave process may be initiated if it is determined that there is a significant risk that the student will harm him/herself, and the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level through reasonable and realistic accommodations and/or on-campus supports.

Before an involuntary leave is considered, efforts will be made to encourage the student to take a voluntary leave, thus preserving, to the extent possible, confidentiality and privacy. A readmission process may still be required of a student electing a voluntary leave to determine his/her readiness to return to school. However, if deemed necessary and appropriate, involuntary leave procedures will be implemented. Once a student has been placed on involuntary leave from the College, he/she must follow all readmission procedures for an involuntary leave of absence in order to be reinstated. Additionally, financial obligations are not waived by such withdrawals.

This policy will not be used in lieu of disciplinary actions to address violations of the College's Student Code of Conduct, nor does it preclude the removal or dismissal of students from the College as a result of violations of other rules, policies or regulations.

**PLACING A STUDENT ON INVOLUNTARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Any student who is currently enrolled at the Community College of Philadelphia may be placed on an involuntary leave of absence from the College and withdrawn from all courses on an interim basis following the commission of one or more of the following acts:

- Engages, or threatens to engage, in behavior which poses imminent danger of causing substantial harm to self or others, and/or
- Engages, or threatens to engage, in behavior which would cause significant property damage, and/or
- Engages, or threatens to engage, in behavior which would directly and substantially impede the lawful activities of others, and/or
- Engages in behavior that negatively impacts the emotional and/or physical welfare of any member of the College community, and/or
- Exhibits behavior that interferes with a student's ability to function in an academic environment or seriously interferes with the educational pursuits of others, and/or

- Commits a violation of the College's Student Code of Conduct and lacks the capacity to comprehend and participate in the College's disciplinary process.

### **PROCEDURE**

The Office of the Dean of Students may be alerted to a student's behavior through the College's online Behavioral Reporting Form, as well as from a variety of other sources on campus including faculty, staff and other students. The Office of the Dean of Students will forward the case to the College's Behavioral Intervention Team for review according to the following procedure:

1. If an involuntary leave is recommended based on the information provided, the Office of the Dean of Students' designee will notify the student that an involuntary leave of absence is under consideration.
2. The Office of the Dean of Students' designee reserves the right to immediately suspend a student from the College on an interim basis, pending an investigation and subsequent hearing, if the student appears to constitute a threat of harm to himself/herself, others or the College community. The student will be notified in writing if this action is necessary.
3. The student will be given the opportunity to appear personally before the Office of the Dean of Students' designee within 48 hours from the effective date of the notification to discuss the following issues:
  - a. The reliability of the information concerning the student's behavior; and/or
  - b. Whether or not the student's behavior poses a significant danger of causing imminent physical harm to the student or others, or of directly and substantially impeding the lawful activities of other members of the campus community.
4. The Office of the Dean of Students' designee will discuss with the student the implications of and procedures relating to an involuntary leave of absence. A copy of this policy will be provided to the student. At any point in this process and when appropriate, the Office of the Dean of Students' designee will encourage the student to take a voluntary leave of absence, thereby eliminating the need to complete the process for an involuntary leave.
5. Following this meeting, the Office of the Dean of Students' designee may either continue or cancel the interim suspension. If the suspension is cancelled, the procedures described in this policy may still be continued. If the interim suspension remains in effect, the next stages of the procedure will be followed, and every effort will be made to expedite the process. The interim suspension will remain in effect until the Behavioral Intervention Team has rendered its decision.
6. If an involuntary leave is needed, the Office of the Dean of Students' designee will forward the case to the Behavioral Intervention Team for review to determine if an involuntary leave of absence is required.
7. The Behavioral Intervention Team will assess, specifically, whether the student engages in or is likely to engage in behavior that poses a danger of causing harm to self or others or disrupts the learning environment. The Team can choose to meet with the student and interview witnesses. The Team will make a written recommendation to the Office of the Dean of Students' designee regarding an involuntary leave of absence. The Office of the Dean of Students' designee will make the final decision and will provide written notice of this decision to the student.

### **APPEAL**

Within five business days from delivery of the Behavioral Intervention Team's decision, the student may request, in writing, that the Vice President for Student Affairs review the decision. The student shall state in writing the specific points he/she wishes the Vice President to consider. Within five business days of receiving the appeal, the Vice President will inform the student of the decision in writing, which will be final. The Vice President may:

1. Affirm the decision;
2. Send the matter back to the Behavioral Intervention Team for further consideration;

3. Affirm the decision, but modify the disposition; or
4. Reinstate the student.

#### **NOTIFICATION**

The College reserves the right to notify a student's designated emergency contact, if on record at the College, that an involuntary leave of absence has been issued. The student's designated emergency contact may be asked to make arrangements for safe removal of the student from the college environment. The College may notify a student's designated emergency contact if the student poses a threat of harm to himself/herself or others.

#### **PROCESS FOR RETURNING FROM AN INVOLUNTARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

After the period of time for an involuntary leave of absence has expired, a student may request to return to the College. To do so, the student must submit a letter to the Dean of Students requesting to return. In addition, the student must have a community mental health clinician/service provider complete the Community Provider Report Form for Students Seeking Re-Entry. Both documents must be submitted before a review can occur. Once all materials are received, the Dean of Students will submit the documentation to the College's Behavioral Intervention Team who will make a determination regarding the student's ability to return. The Dean of Students will communicate the results to the student in writing.