

## C 6.5.600

**Workplace Civility  
and Respect****PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:**

As part of its Mission and Goals, Edmonds Community College has committed to a specific workplace focus. The College has established as a *Strategic Focus and Action* to “Focus on Being a Positive Place to Work and Learn.” Specifically, we commit to the following:

**Edmonds Community College will provide a friendly and supportive environment characterized by civility, mutual respect, and inclusiveness where students, faculty, and staff are helped to achieve their goals.**

Maintaining a culture of respect and civility in the workplace is key to that focus and goal. Research demonstrates that disrespect in the workplace is frequent, severe, distracting, and reciprocal. It often becomes a barrier to effective communication, coaching, and performance appraisal. Disrespect can manifest itself in employee abuse that is both verbal and non-verbal. The impact in the workplace can be severe as it may result in employee turnover, low productivity, reduced morale, diminished loyalty, and physiological impacts such as headaches, depression, and increased absenteeism.

**DIGNITY AND RESPECT FOR EMPLOYEES:**

Each individual at Edmonds Community College (College) shall be treated in a respectful manner with civility. In maintaining an environment of collegiality and respect, College members will treat all members of the community with honesty, respect and courtesy; each individual shall have regard for the dignity and needs of the people with whom they work and those they supervise. College members are reminded that freedom of expression comes with a responsibility to respect the rights and reputations of others and to treat all with civility.

The College is committed to every person’s right to enjoy safety and dignity in the workplace. The College is committed to expecting respectful and civil behavior from all employees at work and in the classroom; we require each employee to support this commitment.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring the workplace and classroom are free of disrespectful, abusive treatment, or harassment within the work area of responsibility.

Disrespectful and uncivil treatment, if it persists, can constitute workplace harassment or create a hostile work environment. Disrespect must not be confused with legitimate comment and/or advice (including relevant negative comments and feedback) from or to managers and supervisors on the work performance or work-related behavior of an individual or group. Feedback on work performance or work-related behavior differs from harassment in that feedback is intended to assist employees to improve work performance or the standard of their behavior. Even the most serious criticism or negative feedback should be delivered respectfully, privately, and courteously.

College employees will not engage in behavior which embarrasses, intimidates, humiliates or offends others---or which a reasonable person would find embarrassing, offensive, or humiliating. Honest feedback on work performance can be communicated in a manner that maintains the dignity of the individual yet identifies serious concerns with performance or conduct. Examples of these behaviors may include but are not limited to:

- Screaming or yelling
- Sarcasm with an apparent intent to humiliate
- Arrogance or condescending behaviors or comments
- Insubordination
- Retaliatory actions
- Use of Email, behaviors or comments that publicly offend, degrade ,or humiliate members of the college community

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION:**

As any first step to resolving workplace issues, initial concerns shall be addressed informally and privately between employees one-on-one and/or with the assistance of their supervisor.

The Human Resource Office can provide individuals with advice and strategies to attempt to resolve these issues at the most informal levels between or among employees and with their supervisors.

If an employee's behaviors persist, College employees should initiate complaints formally (in writing) or informally with the appropriate administrator of the employee's operational unit. Complaints about peers should be presented to the employee's immediate supervisor. Complaints about managers should be presented to the employee's operational unit's Vice-President.

Copies of any written complaints and responses shall be sent to the Vice President of Human Resources. Initial violations of this policy will usually result in an informal investigation or inquiry; the issues may be managed through an employee's performance evaluation process before any discipline will be considered.

Approved 4/20/09

Primary Responsibility of Vice President for Human Resources