

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

**Personnel
CIVILITY POLICY**Policy Statement

The Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (FCSS) is committed to fostering a respectful and inclusive work environment. This civility policy extends to all forms of communication, including face-to-face interactions, phone calls, email, text messages and social media. The FCSS believes in the importance of maintaining professionalism, open dialogue, and a culture of mutual respect. This policy provides guidelines for a safe, welcoming environment that promotes high levels of student and staff achievement and the free exchange of ideas in support of quality educational services.

QUICK LINK[Civility Reporting Form](#)

Civility is a commitment to respect one another and encourage professional and academic growth with open communication, honesty, and empathy. Conversely, uncivil conduct interferes with the vision, mission, goals, and productivity of the FCSS and can negatively impact student learning.

The FCSS Mission Statement:

“The Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools provides educational leadership, fosters partnerships and coordinates services to districts to ensure equitable opportunities for ALL students.”

Through this policy, the FCSS intends to promote mutual respect, civility, courtesy, and safe boundaries among employees, students, parents/guardians, volunteers, and other members of the public. This policy’s purpose is to acknowledge equity as the cornerstone of the FCSS, encourage positive communications and discourage disruptive, volatile, hostile, or aggressive communications or actions. Furthermore, this policy is intended to maintain, to the extent possible, a safe, harassment and discrimination-free workplace for all FCSS employees, students, parents/guardians, volunteers, and the public

The basic purpose of this policy is three-fold:

1. To promote a work and learning environment that is safe, productive, equitable, and nurturing for all staff and students.
2. To encourage the free flow of ideas without fear or intimidation.
3. To provide students with appropriate models for respectful problem-solving.

For purposes of this policy, “uncivil conduct” includes, but is not limited to, directing vulgar, obscene, profane, demeaning, or disparaging gestures or words at another individual; taunting, jeering, inciting others to taunt or jeer at an individual; raising one’s voice at another individual; repeatedly interrupting another individual who is speaking at an appropriate time and place; and invading the personal space of an individual after being directed to move away.

“Uncivil conduct” does not include the expression of controversial or differing viewpoints so long as:

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

1. The ideas are presented in a respectful manner and at a time and place that are appropriate; and
2. Such expression does not materially disrupt, and may not be reasonably anticipated to disrupt, the educational process or working environment; and
3. The content of the expressed idea is reasonably related to the FCSS business.

In most cases, individuals who perceive they have been treated in an uncivil manner will be urged to resolve their concerns through simple, direct, or assisted communication with the person(s) at the source of the concern. When this is not possible or appropriate, such as when an employee's immediate supervisor is the source of the concerns, any person who needs help in identifying and/or using appropriate problem-solving procedures may seek assistance from an administrator.

Individuals are encouraged to work out issues of concern promptly, and preferably no later than two (2) days after an incident has occurred. No retaliation will be tolerated against individuals for working in good faith under this policy to resolve concerns.

This policy seeks to promote a culture of respect and civility. Severe or persistent acts of uncivil conduct may violate other Superintendent Policies (SP), such as:

- [SP HR-1315 Sexual Harassment](#)
- [SP HR-1316 Prohibition of Employee Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation](#)
- [SP HR-1317 Prohibition of Pupil Discrimination, Harassment Retaliation and/or Sexual Harassment](#)

Violation of such policies may result in further action, such as discipline, adverse employment action or criminal charges, as applicable. Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with the ability of FCSS officials to maintain order and discipline in the work environment or school setting.

The FCSS shall review this policy regularly in the context of issues that occur. Department/Program leadership are encouraged to guide, support, and evaluate the FCSS' efforts to establish and reinforce a culture of civility and respect for all.

The following steps are intended to support all partners in the educational process, maintain a safe, equitable, nurturing work and learning environment, provide a model of respectful problem-solving, and reduce the potential for serious or widespread disruptions within the FCSS. The following steps are not intended to manage threatening or intimidating behavior which is serious enough to constitute harassment or to cause one to fear for his/her safety.

Employees:

When an employee believes they have been treated in an uncivil manner by another employee, student of the FCSS, parent, volunteer, or adult member of the community, they should follow the steps outlined below:

Step 1: Within two (2) working days of the incident, speak directly and respectfully with the individual, in an appropriate time, place and manner, seeking to resume communications on a civil basis. Employees may proceed to Step 2 if the source of the uncivil conduct is the employee's immediate supervisor or when the employee is not comfortable addressing the incident on their own.

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Step 2: At any time after Step 1 has been attempted, if civil discussion cannot be resumed, the employee should ask his/her supervisor or other appropriate supervisor to facilitate a conversation, or initiate a discussion on their behalf, with the individual perceived to have been uncivil. Such a facilitated conversation should focus on the expectation of civility and requirements for achieving civil exchanges in the future. If the employee deems it necessary, the employee may complete the Civility Reporting Form and submit to his/her supervisor or other appropriate supervisor with a copy to Human Resources.

Step 3: At any time after Step 2 has been implemented, if uncivil conduct toward the employee continues, the employee and his/her supervisor or other appropriate supervisor will discuss and/or pursue remedies beyond this policy with the assistance of Human Resources and/or Legal Services.

Students:

When a student believes they have been treated in an uncivil manner by an employee, adult volunteer, or another student of the county office, they should follow the steps outlined below:

Step 1: Within two (2) working days of the incident, seek advice from a teacher, or other trusted employee of the school, as well as from a parent/guardian. If advisable, speak directly and respectfully with the individual, in an appropriate time, place and manner, seeking to resume communications on a civil basis.

Step 2: If direct, personal contact with the individual is not advisable, or does not produce a satisfactory result, the student should ask a teacher or administrator to facilitate a conversation between the student and the individual perceived to have been uncivil. Such a facilitated conversation should occur with the knowledge of the student's parent/guardian and should focus on the expectation of civility and requirements for achieving civil exchanges in the future.

Step 3: At any time after Steps 1 and 2 have been attempted, if it is determined that civil communications and appropriate problem-solving cannot be restored between/among the individuals affected, the administrator may modify the conditions under which the individuals interact with one another and may suggest or require the use of additional resources to help address needs.

Any FCSS employee may:

- a. Verbally inform and/or counsel a fellow employee, other agency employee/representative, parent/guardian or member of the public, who engage in unacceptable or disruptive behavior, to act and communicate civilly;
- b. Provide a written copy of this policy to a fellow employee, another agency employee/representative, parent or member of the public who engages in unacceptable or disruptive behavior;
- c. Terminate a meeting, conference, telephone conversation or exchange with a fellow employee, other agency employee/representative, parent/guardian or member of the public who engages in unacceptable or disruptive behavior; and/or
- d. Report any incident involving unacceptable or disruptive behavior to his or her immediate supervisor, Department/Program Administration, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources, or designee.

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Note: At all times, the Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources/designee shall be a resource to any employee whose working relationship to the individual perceived to have been uncivil creates an unusual obstacle to problem-solving.

Retaliation toward any person making proper use of this Superintendent Policy is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Adopted: 09/01/2015

Amended: 09/17/2019, 10/11/2021; 11/3/2023

References

Fresno County Superintendent of Schools | Fresno County Board of Education - Philosophy, Goals, Objectives, and Comprehensive Plans:

- NO. 0000 VISION
- NO. 0100 PHILOSOPHY
- NO. 0410 NON-DISCRIMINATION IN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT AND COUNTY BOARD PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES
- NO. 0415 EQUITY