

CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE

- To optimize communication and interpersonal relations.
- To improve the care that is given to our patients.
- To reinforce an atmosphere of mutual respect for all who work or practice at St. Louis Children's Hospital.
- To establish a process for reporting and addressing problematic behavior.
- To minimize liability of the hospital and its employees.
- To prevent conduct which:
 - a. Interferes with an individual's ability to practice safely
 - b. Creates a hostile or intimidating work environment
 - c. Disrupts the delivery of patient care

APPLICATION

This Code of Conduct applies to all St. Louis Children's Hospital employees (referred to as "staff"), members of the medical staff (referred to as "physicians"), and housestaff (referred to as "resident physicians").

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

- Expected Behaviors:
 - a. Communication will take place in a timely fashion, involving the appropriate person(s), in an appropriate setting.
 - b. Communications, including spoken remarks, written documents, and emails, will be honest and direct and conducted in a professional, constructive, respectful and efficient manner.
 - c. Telephone communications will be respectful and professional. Initiators will prepare for their call by gathering all necessary information, organizing their questions or comments, and coordinating with others who need to reach the same individual about other issues. Receivers will respond in a courteous and professional manner.

- d. Cooperation and availability are expected of physicians, resident physicians, and staff on call. When individuals are paged, they will respond promptly and appropriately.
- e. Be understanding that a variety of experience levels exists, and that tolerance for those who are learning is expected.
- Unacceptable Behaviors:
 - a. Shouting or yelling.
 - b. Use of profanity directed at another individual or healthcare professional.
 - c. Slamming or throwing of objects in anger or disgust.
 - d. Hostile, condemning, or demeaning communications.
 - e. Criticism of performance and/or competency delivered in an inappropriate location (ie, not in private) and not aimed at performance improvement.
 - f. Other behavior demonstrating disrespect, intimidation, or disruption to the delivery of quality patient care.
 - g. Retaliation against any person who addresses or reports unacceptable behavior.

MEETING FOR RESOLUTION

The optimal way to address inappropriate conduct is a face-to-face meeting between the parties involved using the following steps:

- The person who was aggrieved is expected to address the issue with the other party in a timely manner and private setting using this Code of Conduct as a reference.
- This meeting may be more productive after a “cooling off” period of a few hours or a few days so that the parties involved can gain perspective on the precipitating events and process breakdowns that may have been contributing factors.
- If facilitation of the discussion is needed, the department manager and appropriate physician leadership can serve as facilitators. If the incident involved a physician and occurred in a medical unit, the physician leadership will be a medical physician, and if in a surgical unit, a surgeon peer.
- Sincere apologies should be encouraged and every reasonable attempt should be made to defuse the situation without further intervention.
- If clinical care/hospital process deficiencies are discovered during this face-to-face meeting, these concerns need to be addressed by the department’s leadership for improvement.
- No documentation of incidents resolved by the parties is required.

WRITTEN REPORT FOR UNRESOLVED ISSUES

- If the issue is not resolved after a reasonable attempt by the affected parties, the situation may be reported using the Code of Conduct Report (*see attached form*). The completed form should be sent to the St. Louis Children's Hospital Risk Management office, where all concerns will be logged.
- Concerns will be reviewed by the Risk Management Office. For concerns regarding a physician or resident physicians, this review will also include two physicians (medical and surgical) appointed by the Children's Medical Executive Committee (CMEC). Each review will include view points of all involved parties and possible clinical care/hospital process deficiencies that may have contributed to the situation.

ACTION FOR UNRESOLVED ISSUES

- If the complaint is found to have merit by the Risk Management Office and the medical and surgical reviewing physicians, the following action should be taken:
 - a. For St. Louis Children's Hospital staff, their immediate supervisor and a representative from Human Resources will be sent a copy of the complaint and the review. They will develop a plan for appropriate counseling and intervention.
 - b. For physicians or resident physicians, a copy of the complaint and the review will be sent to their immediate supervisor who will develop a plan for appropriate counseling and intervention.
- Any action reported in accordance with this Code of Conduct which requires review or follow-up is not considered by St. Louis Children's Hospital to be disciplinary action; however, actions reported may result in disciplinary action. Any necessary staff disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with St. Louis Children's Hospital policies. For physicians, any necessary disciplinary action will be taken only after the CMEC makes a determination that it is appropriate to take corrective action as defined in the Medical Staff Bylaws. Any necessary disciplinary action for resident physicians will be conducted pursuant to the WU/BJH/SLCH GME Consortium policies.
- To protect privacy, written reports containing individual's names or departments will not be transmitted by email.
- A summary of action taken will be sent to the Risk Management Office and logged with the original complaint.
- Semi-annual review of data trends will be conducted through the Risk Management Office and reported to the CMEC, the hospital's Senior Staff, and the Quality Committee of the Board of Trustees.

RECOMMENDED BY: Children's Medical Executive Committee (CMEC)
Patient Safety

EFFECTIVE DATE: Original July 2006
Reviewed June 2008
Revised

AUTHORIZED BY: _____
Lee F. Fetter
President

St. Louis Children's Hospital
Code of Conduct Report
Send completed form to the Risk Management Office

Date: _____ Time of Event: _____ Location of Event: _____

1. Please describe the situation which you found to be unacceptable:

2. What circumstances precipitated this event?

3. Names of Patient/Family, Employee, or Medical Staff involved:

4. List all who witnessed the event:

5. How do you think this situation impacted patient care, hospital operations, your work or your team member's work?

6. What did you or others do to address this conduct?

Name of person completing form: _____ Department: _____

IMPORTANT NOTE: If the behavior you experienced involves any form of harassment (including, but not limited to harassment based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age or disability), violence, or the threat of violence, please contact any member of management or the Human Resources Department at 286-0904. See BJC policies 9-4 and 7-8.