

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS  
HIGH SCHOOL

**CODE OF CIVILITY POLICY**

New Mexico School for the Arts (the “School”), is a New Mexico public, statewide, residential, state chartered high school for students with exceptional promise in the arts. The School Code of Civility Policy is adopted to promote mutual respect and orderly conduct with the school, thereby setting a model for students and others in the community.

**PURPOSE**

- 1.) Define “incivility” in the context of the policy.
- 2.) Identify strategies for dealing with incivility when it arises in the School setting;
- 3.) Establish a complaint procedure to address complaints of individuals who believe they have been treated in an unprofessional and disrespectful manner; and
- 4.) Establish methods of communication to the School community regarding the policy and Code of Civility.

**DEFINITION AND EXAMPLES OF INCIVILITY**

“Incivility,” when used in the policy, means the following:

- 1.) Rude, abusive or intolerant, offensive or obscene language and behavior in any type of school setting when such behavior may tend to erode education or diminish an atmosphere of professionalism or mutual respect; or
- 2.) Rude, abusive, intolerant, offensive or obscene language in person, voice-mail, telephone conversations, written correspondence, e-mail or any other form of communication; or
- 3.) Threatening or belligerent conduct that in any way interferes or threatens to interfere with the orderly operations of the School or places another person in fear of imminent physical harm.

**STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING INCIVILITY WHEN IT OCCURS**

- 1.) If a participant in a meeting becomes verbally abusive, the School employee responsible for chairing the meeting, on their own initiative or at the request of another meeting participant, should immediately ask the participant to stop and let them know that if the participant does not stop that the meeting will be terminated. At the discretion of the meeting chair, a suggested five minute break can be proposed to allow everyone to regroup. If a break is taken and problems recur after the meeting is reconvened, the chair will end the meeting and document the basis for the meeting termination.

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- 2.) If the School is under a timeline to conduct a meeting involving an uncivil participant, the school employee responsible for chairing the meeting should advise the participant that the meeting will be completed without him or her.
- 3.) If, during a telephone call, a participant becomes verbally abusive, the school employee making the telephone call will immediately ask the person/s on the other end of the line to stop and let them know that if the participant does not stop that the employee will terminate the call by hanging up.
- 4.) E-mails that are verbally abusive or have a threatening or abusive tone should be forwarded to the employee's immediate supervisor or Head of School. The supervisor or Head of School will follow up with the person sending the e-mail.
- 5.) If at any time a staff or faculty member, student, parent or other individual threatens bodily harm, either in person or in writing, or attempts to physically touch in a threatening and harmful manner any person on school property, the police must be notified immediately.

COMPLAINT AND RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

1.) Procedures

All complaints by or about member of the general public should be brought to the attention of the Head of School. And if necessary should be reviewed through successive administrative levels in sequential order to the Head of School and subsequently to the Council where appropriate. If first brought to the attention of the Council, Council members will be encouraged to advise any complainants to first consult with the appropriate staff member or administrator and then, if necessary, to bring the problem to the attention of the Council through the administrative grievance process.

Examples:

- An employee believes a parent is being uncivil toward school personnel. The employee should seek the intervention of their immediate supervisor or the Head of School.
  - A parent is determined to have been repeatedly uncivil toward school personnel. The parent will be directed to communicate with the school only through specific individuals. If any member of the staff feels threatened or in fear for their safety, the Police will be called immediately.
  - A teacher is alleged to be uncivil toward a parent. The parent should seek the intervention of the Head of School.
- 2.) An individual employee, parent or any member of the community uses email to communicate in an uncivil manner. The individual will be directed to cease using the email for such correspondence.

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3.) Record of Complaint

The School must keep a written record of properly presented complaints whether presented by letter, informal conference or through a scheduled meeting. Such written records must include any administrative response.

4.) Sanctions for Violations of Policy

Violations of this Policy will lead to restriction on the right of the member of the general public to be present on school property or on their right to interact with members of school staff.

NOTIFICATION

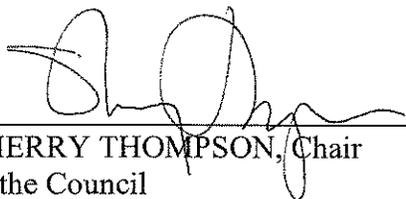
The contents of this policy and the behavioral expectation it sets forth will be communicated to the school community through, but not necessarily limited to:

1. School Newsletters
2. NMSA's Website
3. Employee Handbook and Parent/Student Handbook
4. Other publications as determined by the Head of School

The Governing Council of the New Mexico School for the Arts adopted this Code of Civility Policy, effective February 3, 2015.

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ATTEST;



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SHERRY THOMPSON, Chair  
of the Council



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PAULA TACKETT, Secretary  
of the Council