

## Recognizing and Supporting All Students Needing Support or Experiencing Crisis or Distress

### Where do I start?

If you are concerned about a student, don't let uncertainty stop you from taking action to help. Westfield State is committed to supporting the wellbeing of students. The Dean of Students Office has developed this guide to help you **Recognize, Respond to, Refer and Report** concerns about your students. For additional information, talk to your supervisor or department chair and contact the **Dean of Students Office at (413) 572-5421**.

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Dean of Students Office  
Westfield State University  
Case Management

## Responding to Students Needing Support or Experiencing Distress and Crisis

### ➤ Listen sensitively and carefully

Vulnerable students need to be heard and helped. They may find it difficult to articulate their distress or hardship. Ask directly if they need support, if they feel their functioning is impaired, or if they have thoughts of harming themselves or others. **Threats to harm self or others should be immediately reported to Westfield State University Police at 413-572-5262 or call 911.**

### ➤ Trust your instinct to take action - Ask "Tell me about your current struggle."

If you are concerned about a student, consult your department chair, supervisor and the Dean of Students Office. Promptly report safety concerns and Student Code of Conduct violations.

### ➤ Stay Safe

If a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior, your safety, the student's safety and the welfare of the campus community are the top priorities. Coordinated professional help and follow-up care are effective ways to prevent suicide and violence.

### ➤ Share what you know

Students in hardship are sometimes reluctant to share their status. Sharing what you know allows the appropriate university staff to proactively reach out with support and resources. State, federal laws and university policies require reporting in many crisis situations.

**The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows faculty and staff to discuss student health and safety concerns with relevant campus offices trained to handle situations with sensitivity and care. Taking appropriate action does not violate a student's privacy.**

### ➤ Practice Self-Care

Supporting a vulnerable student can take a toll on your personal wellbeing. Make sure to acknowledge what you've been through and take care of yourself. Support resources can be found through the Dean of Students Office at (413) 572-5421. 24/7 confidential counseling and other support resources are available through Human Resources and the Employee Assistance Program by visiting <https://mylifeexpert.com> or calling (800) 451-1834.

### ➤ Always report serious or persistent behavior

Your firsthand knowledge and personal connection to a student is valuable in understanding and appropriately responding to their situation. To coordinate a timely response, report serious or persistent behavior to the Dean of Students Office as soon as possible. Violations of the Student Code of Conduct should be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

### ➤ Clarify your expectations

Your syllabus can send a positive signal of support for students' learning and well-being and set early limits on disruptive or self-destructive behaviors. Consider including a section with support resources and encourage students to seek help when they need it. Remind students of support resources and expectations for conduct. Familiarize yourself with the guiding language for student behavior in the Student Handbook.

### ➤ De-escalate and Support

Students in distress can be sensitive. Avoid threatening, potentially embarrassing, or intimidating statements. Help students connect with the resources they need.

## RECOGNIZE

## RESPOND

## REFER

## REPORT

### Not sure what, but something's wrong

*Disturbing content in paper; emails; decline in academic performance; excessive absenteeism; irrational or bizarre behavior; sudden change in demeanor (from extroverted to withdrawn, organized to forgetful, etc.); significant changes in appearance; behavior or personal hygiene.*

*Express concern and care. Give an example of a time that the student's behavior has worried you. Listen to and believe student's responses. Be supportive and encouraging if student agrees to get help. Call University Police at (413-572-5262) if there is a potential threat to student's safety or the safety of others.*

**Urgent: WSUPD at (413) 572-5262 or 911**  
**Consult:**  
**Counseling Center at (413) 572-5790 or TELUS app**

**Dean of Students at deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5421;**  
**[westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](http://westfield.ma.edu/submitareport)**

### Anxiety, stress, panic

*Excessive worry, guilt or nervousness; decline in academic performance; inability to stay focused in class; physical symptoms such as difficulty breathing; pounding or racing heart; numbness, tingling, sweating or chills; weakness or dizziness; jaw pain and teeth grinding; chest or stomach pain.*

*Express concern and care. Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation. Recommend (or, if necessary, insist upon) intervention.*

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**Consult:**  
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**[westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](http://westfield.ma.edu/submitareport)**

### Economic hardship (job loss, food or housing insecurity)

*Frequent or extended absences; decline in academic performance; mentions financial or other challenges; difficulty concentrating and making decisions; exhaustion/fatigue; excessive worry, sleeping/eating problems.*

*Express concern and care. Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation. Listen to and believe student's responses. Provide student with resources. Be supportive and encouraging if the student agrees to get help.*

**Financial Aid at financialaid@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 579-3080 or The Fostering Success Network at (413) 572-8833 and/or (413) 572-8838**

**Dean of Students at deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5421;**  
**[westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](http://westfield.ma.edu/submitareport)**

### Disability-related challenge

*Student mentions struggling due to disability; expresses concerns such as difficulty reading, concentrating, or memorizing; challenges with organizing tasks, homework, or other issues potentially related to a potential undiagnosed disability.*

*Express concern and care. Listen to and believe student's responses. Avoid stigmatizing behaviors such as criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, overly emphasizing or minimizing the situation. Provide student with a referral to Disability Services. Be supportive and encouraging.*

**Disability Services at ds@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5789**

**Disability Services at ds@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5789 & Dean of Students at deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5421;**  
**[westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](http://westfield.ma.edu/submitareport)**

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### Self harm, suicide ideation, suicidal risk

*Decline in academic performance; written or verbal statements preoccupied with theme of death or that convey intent to harm self or others; fresh cuts, scratches or other wounds; withdrawal from classes; activities, and friends; statements of hopelessness such as, "I hate this life" or "Everyone is better off without me".*

*If there is an Immediate concern or a potential threat to a student's safety or the safety of others, call University Police at (413-572-5262) or 911. Express concern and care. Always take suicidal statements, thoughts or behaviors very seriously. If you suspect a student may be suicidal, stay with the student and seek immediate consultation.*

**Urgent: WSUPD at  
(413) 572-5262 or 911  
Counseling Center at  
(413) 572-5790**

**Dean of Students at  
deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5421;  
[westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](mailto:deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu)**

### Alcohol, marijuana, or other substance use

*Intoxicated/high in class or at meetings/events; excessive sleepiness or hyper energy; decline in academic performance; references to alcohol or drug use in conversations, papers, projects, etc.; deterioration in physical appearance (bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, trembling hands, etc.).*

*Express concern and care. Give an example of a time that the student's behavior has worried you. Be supportive and encouraging if the student agrees to get help. Offer to help the student make an appointment for substance use screening, evaluation and counseling.*

**Urgent: WSUPD at  
(413) 572-5262 or 911  
Counseling Center at  
(413) 572-5790**

**Dean of Students at  
deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5421;  
[westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](mailto:deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu)**

### Disruptive classroom behaviors

*Unwarranted interruptions; slurs or other forms of intimidation; rude or abusive behavior; failure to adhere to instructor's directions. When to call WSUPD for immediate assistance: throwing items, refusing to leave, threat of harm to self or others, preventing others from leaving, physically abusive behavior; showing or stating the presence of a weapon.*

*Call University Police at (413-572-5262) if there is a potential threat to student's safety or the safety of others. Express concern and care. Explain the impact of the student's behavior on the group or class. Outline your expectations verbally and in your syllabus and help student explore options and alternatives such as chair of the department or academic associate dean.*

**Urgent: WSUPD at  
(413) 572-5262 or 911**

**Dean of Students at  
deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5421;  
[westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](mailto:deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu)**

### Hazing

*Withdrawal from activities and friends; exhaustion/fatigue; significant change in appearance or personal hygiene (e.g. wearing embarrassing or humiliating attire); visible injuries or bruises, cuts, brands, or scars with a distinct pattern (e.g. symbols, initials, or Greek letters).*

*Call University Police at (413) 572-5262 or 911 if there is a potential threat to the student's safety or the safety of others. Express concern and care. Remain calm. Showing outrage may cause a student to shut down. Do not interpret student's emotion (or lack of emotion) as evidence of a crime. Listen to and believe student's responses. Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation.*

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(413) 572-5262 or 911**

**Dean of Students at  
deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5421;  
[westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](mailto:deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu)**

## RECOGNIZE

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### Known or suspected health or medical issue

*Frequent or extended absences; decline in academic performance; mentions relationship, financial, or other challenges; difficulty concentrating and making decisions; exhaustion/fatigue; excessive worry, sleeping/eating problems.*

*Express concern and care. Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation. Listen to and believe student's responses. Provide student with resources. Be supportive and encouraging if the student agrees to get help.*

**Urgent: WSUPD at (413) 572-5262 or 911 Health Services at [healthservices@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:healthservices@westfield.ma.edu) or (413) 572-5415**

**Dean of Students at [deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu) or (413) 572-5421; [westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](https://westfield.ma.edu/submitareport)**

### Bias incident

*Act(s) of discriminatory harassment against a person or property on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, marital or parental status, or veteran status.*

*Express concern and care. Listen to and believe student's responses. Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation. Encourage student to save photos, communications, or other evidence. **Do not remove** any evidence prior to reporting (e.g. clean graffiti, erase whiteboard, etc.).*

**Urgent: WSUPD at (413) 572-5262 or 911 Office of Human Resources, Title IX and Equal Opportunity at (413) 572-8670**

**Vice President, Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion [JEDI@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:JEDI@westfield.ma.edu) Dean of Students at [deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu) or (413) 572-5421 or WSUPD at (413)-572-5262; [westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](https://westfield.ma.edu/submitareport)**

### Sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation

*Act(s) of Sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation as defined under Title IX.*

*Call University Police at (413) 572-5262 or 911 if there is a potential threat to student's safety or the safety of others. Express concern and care. Identify resources like Title IX, Counseling Center, Dean of Students and Public Safety for safety planning. Encourage student to save copies of all communications including texts, voicemails, and pictures.*

**Urgent: WSUPD at (413) 572-5262 or 911 Title IX Office at [titleixoffice@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:titleixoffice@westfield.ma.edu) or (413) 572-8728 Counseling Center at (413) 572-5790**

**Title IX Coordinator at [titleixoffice@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:titleixoffice@westfield.ma.edu) or (413) 572-8728 or Dean of Students at [deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu) or (413) 572-5421; [westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](https://westfield.ma.edu/submitareport)**

### Cyber misbehavior (identity or password theft, cyberbullying, online harassment)

*Internet flaming, trolling, name-calling, or harassment; threats to release private information/photos; demands for money in exchange for private/intimate information (sextortion- Title IX referral as well); identity theft, account hacking.*

*Express concern and care. Encourage student to update all account passwords and privacy settings. Encourage student to keep a log of bullying/harassing behavior; take and save screenshots of online harassment (Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, etc.); save copies of all communications including texts, voicemails, and pictures.*

**Urgent: WSUPD at (413) 572-5262 or 911**

**Dean of Students at [deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@westfield.ma.edu) or (413) 572-5421; [westfield.ma.edu/submitareport](https://westfield.ma.edu/submitareport)**

## Maintaining Compliance with State and Federal Laws and University Policies

### Classroom Student Conduct Policy

Westfield State University students are prohibited from engaging in behavior or activity that causes the disruption of teaching, learning, research, and other academic activities recognized as necessary to the fulfillment of the University mission. Examples of potentially disruptive behavior may include, but are not limited to, using inappropriate language directed at an individual or group, unsolicited talking in class, sleeping in class, using or activating unapproved mobile devices, arriving at or leaving the classroom while class is in session and/or failing to comply with the reasonable request of a University faculty member. When disruptive behavior occurs in the classroom, a faculty member has the right to remove the student from the classroom for one session, and with continued disruption, request that the student be removed permanently.

Provost/Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs  
<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/university-policies>  
Main Number: (413) 572-5400

### Title IX – Sexual Harassment Policy

Westfield State University is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy learning, living and working environment that is free from all forms of gender-based misconduct. Consistent with this commitment, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that we operate, and are required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") to not discriminate in such a manner. The requirement not to discriminate in the education program or activity extends to admission and employment. Questions about Title IX may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, or both.

Office of Human Resources, Title IX and Equal Opportunity  
<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/sexual-violence>  
(413) 572-8485

### Affirmative Action

Affirmative Action is a set of laws, policies, guidelines, and administrative practices intended to end and correct the effects of a specific form of discrimination. In accordance with the law, the University has established guidelines with respect to recruitment, promotion, and appointment to vacant positions.

Office of Human Resources, Title IX and Equal Opportunity  
<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/offices/human-resources-title-ix-equal-opportunity/title-ix-equal-opportunity>  
(413) 572-8809

### Code of Student Conduct

The Office of Student Conduct fosters an educational and developmental approach to student conduct, focusing on learning through self-reflection and personal accountability for behavior and decisions. The Office of Student Conduct recognizes that within a student's career at the University, they may make bad choices while exploring their growth and development. A primary role for the office is to help educate and guide our students to make choices that support their educational and personal goals. Established regulations and procedures are designed to guarantee a range of student freedoms and protect their due process and promote order. The Office of Student Conduct is committed to providing an environment where individuals exhibit respect for the rights of all persons, feel safe, and receive an education.

Office of Student Conduct  
[catalog.westfield.ma.edu](https://www.westfield.ma.edu/catalog)  
(413) 572-5421

### Alcohol and Other Drug Policy

Westfield State University policies and regulations pertaining to the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages and the possession, use, distribution, and sale of illicit drugs are designed (1) to conform to the state and federal laws and/or (2) enhance the health, safety, property, and educational interests of all members of the University community. The purpose of the Alcohol and Other Drug Policy is to promote a campus environment that is compatible with and supportive of academic success and personal growth.

Office of Student Conduct  
<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/university-policies>  
(413) 572- 5421

### Clery Act

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act is the federal law originally known as the Campus Security Act that requires universities to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses. The law is tied to federal financial aid program funding and is enforced by the United States Department of Education. A copy of Westfield State University's Annual Clery Security and Fire Report can be found on the Department Of Public Safety's website.

University Police Department  
<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/offices/department-of-university-police>  
(413) 572-5262

### Hazing

Hazing is conduct by members of any student organization (on or off campus) that willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Examples can include: beating; branding; forced calisthenics or physical activity; exposure to the weather; forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance; activities that subject a student or other person to mental stress such as extended deprivation of sleep or extended isolation; or any treatment likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of a student or other person. Hazing is a crime under Massachusetts law. Any employee or contractor must promptly report suspected or actual hazing to law enforcement. In addition, notify the Office of Student Conduct or a supervisor, who must promptly notify the Office of Student Conduct. The person making the report should not attempt to investigate the matter.

Office of Student Conduct  
[catalog.westfield.ma.edu](https://www.westfield.ma.edu/catalog)  
(413) 572-5421

### Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment, & Retaliation

The EO Plan prohibits all conditions and all actions or omissions, including all acts of discrimination, discriminatory harassment and retaliation, which deny or have the effect of denying to any person their rights to equity and security on the basis of their membership in or association with a member(s) of any protected class. This policy reaffirms the values of civility, pluralism and pre-eminence of individual human dignity as preconditions to the achievement of an academic community, which recognizes and utilizes the resources of all people. The prohibited conduct contained in this policy shall apply to, and be enforced against, all members of the University community, including, but not limited to, faculty, librarians, administrators, staff, students, vendors, contractors and all others having dealings with the institution.

A detailed outline of this policy can be found in the EO Plan.

Office of Human Resources, Title IX and Equal Opportunity  
<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/university-policies>  
(413) 572-8106

### Academic Honesty Policy

Academic honesty, a necessary foundation of a learning community, is expected of all members of the University community. Academic freedom depends on honesty and integrity. The University makes academic integrity a priority and the administration must provide support services to address issues of academic honesty.

Office of the Registrar/Academic Records  
<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/university-policies>  
Main Number: (413) 579-3200

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that allows present and former students access to their educational records and provides basic privacy protection. Educational records are defined as those directly related to a student and maintained by an educational agency or institution. FERPA permits disclosure of personal identifiable information from a student's educational record to parents, guardians, champions, police or others to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals. Information can be shared with University personnel when there is a specific need to know. Observations of a student's conduct or statements made by a student are not part of a student's educational record and should be appropriately shared.

Office of the Registrar  
<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/offices/registrar>  
Main Number: (413) 579-3200

### **Smoke Free/Tobacco and Marijuana Free Campus Policy**

Smoking and/or the use of tobacco and/or marijuana products will not be permitted on any University property or University-leased property including buildings, grounds, walkways, parking lots, wooded areas and all other property owned or operated by the University. The only exception to this prohibition is that the smoking of tobacco cigarettes may only be allowed in designated areas approved by the University President and marked by appropriate signage. All campus constituents have a collective responsibility to promote the safety and health of the campus community and, therefore, share in the responsibility of policy compliance. Individuals observed smoking and/or using tobacco or marijuana, in any form, are to be reminded, in a professional and courteous manner, of the University policy.

Office of Human Resources Title IX and Equal Opportunity.  
<https://www.westfield.ma.edu/university-policies>  
(413) 572-8670

#### **FOLLOW-UP, SUPPORT & TRAINING Department of Public Safety (413) 572-5262**

- Immediate emergency services for threatening or dangerous behavior
- Active shooter and campus safety trainings
- Campus-wide notification system for crisis notification and response
- Clery crime logs and security reporting

#### **Health Services (413) 572-5415**

- Prescriptions
- Health education
- Urgent care
- Rapid Strep, Mono, Pregnancy, Flu, COVID-19 and Urine testing
- Women's health- Pap, STI testing, birth control
- Men's health
- Specialty referrals as needed

#### **Counseling Center (413) 572-5790**

- Substance use screening, evaluation and counseling
- Classroom and department presentations on mental health- related topics; faculty and staff training on identifying and assisting high-risk students
- Outreach and education information regarding alcohol, marijuana, tobacco/vaping, and other drugs
- Individual counseling
- Same day counseling
- Crisis intervention
- Psychiatric services for current clients of the Counseling Center
- Referrals to community and other WSU resources
- Faculty and Staff consultations

#### **FOLLOW-UP, SUPPORT & TRAINING Dean of Students Office (413) 572-5421**

- Supporting a student in hardship, crisis, or trauma
- Primary contact for parent/guardian/champion members in times of crisis or emergencies
- Assistance in managing challenging classroom situations
- Supporting students facing food and/or financial insecurity
- Third-party facilitation and informal mediation services
- Strategies for dealing with students who are presenting disruptive or concerning behaviors
- Resources for managing stress and other reactions to challenging situations

#### **Disability Services (413) 572-5789 ds@westfield.ma.edu**

- Registering and accommodating students with a disability
- Faculty and staff consultation on topics or concerns related to students with disabilities

#### **TELUS APP**

- The TELUS App is a supplemental mental health support phone app that provides 24/7 multi-lingual talk or text chat options, as well as various mental health and wellness resources. The TELUS App is available free from the Counseling Center to all students and is not meant to replace counseling or emergency services. Faculty and Staff can utilize the TELUS App for consultations.

