Policy Title: Standards of Professional Behavior

Date of Origin (if available): May 11, 2015

Date(s) of Revision:

Faculty Sponsor(s): Eileen Gerrard –Gough, Deb Kenny

Nursing Department Approval Date(s): May 11, 2015

Policy: All nursing students are expected to conduct themselves in a legal, ethical, and appropriate manner during all phases of their education. Therefore, students must possess and apply a working knowledge of the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses (2015) and other applicable standards of professional nursing behavior (See reference list).

A. Standards of Professional Behavior will be reflected in all courses with behavior congruent with professional practice measured by Core values that reflect the philosophy and framework of Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

1. Development of a relationship that exhibits a caring philosophy.
2. Respectful and collaborative decision making as a foundation for relationships with clients, patients, colleagues, faculty, staff, preceptors and health care providers and community.
3. An ethic of caring reflected by appropriate emotional responses, communication, punctuality, hygiene and attire that seeks to preserve the wholeness and dignity of self and others.
4. Appropriate self-disclosure and adherence to confidentiality of clients, patients and others.
5. Behavior that reflects responsibility and accountability for the safety of clients, patients, self and others.
6. Authenticity and trust which are key attributes of caring students.
7. Accountability to professional and ethical behavior in all means of communication including the educational online environment and social media platforms.

B. The following represent examples of illegal, unethical, and/or inappropriate professional behavior:

1. Acting in a manner inconsistent with ethical or legal guidelines
2. Failure to follow program and clinical education guidelines
3. Failure to appear for scheduled clinical without approval or proper notification
4. Violating patient confidentiality (e.g. discussing a patient/client in a public area or with persons not involved in the healthcare of that patient/client)
5. Withdrawing from clinical for any reason without permission of the instructor
6. Failure to respond in a timely manner to emails and other communications from instructors, program staff, or college personnel

C. Consequences of such behavior range from disciplinary letters from the instructor, option coordinator and/or department chair to dismissal from the program.

D. Behavioral Descriptions:

1. **Public Professional Conduct**: This includes behavior on websites, blogs, email, and voicemail. Potential employers are conducting online searches to evaluate candidates and make decisions about job interviews or offers. Legal authorities also view websites for evidence of illegal activities. Students should note that if they identify themselves as a student in the program in email signatures, voicemail files, website/blog information, then this information becomes part of their program-related behavior and may be used in the student evaluations.

2. **Students Demonstrating Lack of Clinical Competency and/or Judgment**: Professional impairment is defined broadly as “an interference in professional functioning that is reflected in one or more of the following ways: (a) an inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one’s repertoire of professional behavior, (b) an inability to acquire professional skills in order to reach an acceptable level of competency, and (c) an inability to control personal stress, psychological dysfunction, and/or excessive emotional reactions that interfere with professional functioning” (Lamb et al., 1987; p. 598).

E. Procedure for Allegations of Professional Behavior Misconduct:

1. Concerns about a student’s behavior being unsuitable for clinical experiences may be raised by the Instructor/Preceptor, clinical site staff, and student peers and if necessary brought as a formal allegation to the Student Conduct Committee of the Department of Nursing. When emotional or behavior problems result in a student being unsuitable for clinical practice, the student may be removed from the clinical experience. Once a concern is raised, information will be gathered by the faculty member who is teaching the course in which the behavior occurred. The information may include:

   a. Expert opinions from clinical and academic faculty and/or professional resources to the faculty
   b. A review of the student’s acceptance of meaningful remediation
   c. Consideration of the extent to which continued enrollment places unreasonable or excessive demands upon other students, faculty, and clinical sites.
   d. An assessment of the student’s ability to function as a nursing student in direct contact with clinical populations
   e. A written student response to the allegation.
2. When information has been compiled a written allegation descriptive of the concern may be brought forth by the Lead/Course Faculty to the appropriate program level Option Coordinator of the Department of Nursing. A collaborative review of the concern will be conducted by the Department to determine whether a formal evaluation by the Admissions and Progressions Committee is warranted.

3. If a formal review of the issue is warranted, all evaluation documents will be presented to the Admissions and Progressions Committee for review and determination.

4. The student will be informed of the determination and recommended consequences in writing within 10 business days of the allegation with copies forwarded to the Lead/Course faculty, the Option Coordinator, Nursing Chair, Associate Dean and Dean of the College.

F. Appeals: The determination and recommended consequences of the Admissions and Progressions Committee may be appealed by the student within 10 business days to the Department Chair according to the policy in the Beth-El Graduate and Undergraduate Nursing Student Handbooks.

G. Further appeals may be addressed to the Graduate School by graduate nursing students and the Academics Ethics Code Committee (AECC) by undergraduate nursing students.

Rationale: The Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences’ Standards of Professional Behavior Policy reflects the philosophy of the Department of Nursing and the profession of nursing which require ethical, legal and professional behaviors that affect integrity in the field of practice.

Key Words: Professionalism, Professional Behavior, Standards of Behavior, Ethics.

Reference List:
- Nursing Department Mission, Vision, Values Statement
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) A Nurse’s Guide to the Use of Social Media NCSBN What You Need to Know About Substance Use Disorder in Nursing
- Peer Assistance Services, Colorado www.peerassistanceeservices.org