

Explore Section 

Bias Incident, Harassment and Hate Crime Response

The purpose of this Bias Response Protocol is to establish an understanding of how Swarthmore College defines a “bias incident” and to identify and describe how the College responds to reports of bias incidents, harassment and hate crimes.

Issues related to diversity and inclusion are multidimensional and complex. The Swarthmore community should expect that the definitions and procedures will continue to evolve. The College encourages active engagement by all community members in the ongoing conversations and efforts if we are to make real progress toward our goal of cultivating a diverse and inclusive learning environment. Shared responsibility is at the core of this goal.

Definitions

Bias generally refers to any belief, attitude, behavior or practice that reflects an assumed superiority of one group over another. Bias is expressed through prejudice or discrimination and can be overt or covert. Bias can be directed against individuals or groups, but it can also be institutionalized into policies, practices and structures. While freedom of expression and the open exchange of ideas are a vital part of the educational discourse, bias activity dehumanizes people, erodes individual rights, debilitates morale, and interferes with the effectiveness of work and learning environments.

BIAS INCIDENT

Bias incidents are acts of conduct, speech, or expression that target individuals and groups based on their actual or perceived race/color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity/expression, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Bias-related incidents, while abhorrent and intolerable, do not alone meet the necessary elements required to prove a crime, or even a violation of College policy. However, to be successfully addressed, bias-related incidents do require the active participation of a community committed to fundamental human dignity and equality.

HARASSMENT BASED ON A PROTECTED CLASS

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gender identity or expression, pregnancy, marital status, medical condition, veteran status, disability, or any other College-recognized protected classification. This type of harassment can occur in any form and can be directed at individuals or groups. When appropriate, minor infractions can be resolved informally and with remedial steps, including training, counseling, or mediation. When this harassment objectively and subjectively harms the person by severely, persistently, or pervasively interfering with the person's educational opportunities, peaceful enjoyment of residence and community, or terms of employment, it is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion/dismissal. In all cases, the College encourages individuals to seek support and assistance as soon as harassing conduct occurs. Before any conduct can be considered for the disciplinary action, it must be clear that no substantial free expression interests are threatened by bringing a formal charge of harassment.

HATE CRIME

Hate crimes are definable crimes, such as: crimes involving threats of violence, property damage, personal injury and other illegal conduct, but that are also intentionally motivated by bias. A hate crime is an infraction of the law and will be addressed accordingly.

REPORTING AND PRIVACY

Information reported on this form may be submitted anonymously and is considered private to the extent permitted by law and/or consistent with the mission of the College and its [Code of Conduct](#).

Privacy generally means that information related to a report of bias will only be shared with a limited circle of individuals. The use of this information is limited to those College employees who "need to know" in order to assist in the active review, investigation, or resolution of the report. While these individuals generally are not confidential resource personnel, they will be discreet and respect the privacy of all individuals involved in the process.

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RESOURCES

[Title IX Resource Guide-Here's How We Can Help \[PDF\]](#) →

[Sexual Assault Resources](#) →

[Building a Safe Campus \[PDF\]](#) →

[Campus Map](#) →

[Pennsylvania Megan's Law](#) →

[Swarthmore Borough Police Department](#) →

[Swarthmore Borough Crime Statistics](#) →

[Carebridge Employee Assistance Program](#) →

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