



## **Bias Incident Toolkit**

The University of St. Thomas strives to provide an education which will develop students to be future leaders in society and provide them with the ability to engage with the world as citizens mindful of the inclusion of others. The University also stresses that diversity is needed in order to achieve excellence. With this in mind, we strive to create a learning environment that reflects the cultures and experiences of all of our community members and demonstrates the university's dedication to social justice and dignity of everyone.

In order to prioritize this mission and the needs of the St. Thomas community, the Division of Student Affairs has developed the Bias Incident Toolkit which is designed to help St. Thomas respond promptly and effectively to reported behavior that does not align with our community's mission and values. Behavior or actions that go against the University's principles of community, or display themes of hate, bigotry, bias and discrimination are not welcome at St. Thomas and will be addressed.

### **This Toolkit aims to:**

- 1) Inform the campus community about the procedures in place to address reports of bias and provide the offices where incidents of bias should be reported.
- 2) Provide information on the methods of communication regarding the incident and the responsive actions that St. Thomas will take following a bias report.
- 3) Detail available resources that provide care and support for community members who have been affected, including counseling, advising and community education.

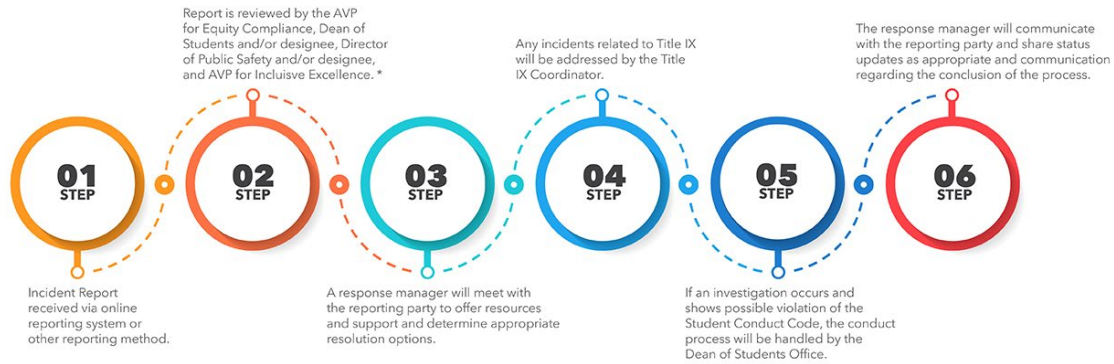
### **What is a bias incident or a hate crime?**

A **bias incident** is unwelcome conduct that has a negative impact on an individual or group and that one could reasonably conclude is based on an actual or perceived **protected characteristic**, regardless of whether the conduct is unlawful or violates policy.

**Hate crime** means conduct that meets all the elements of a criminal offense committed against a person or property that is motivated in whole or in part by bias based on the protected characteristic of an individual or group.

**Protected characteristic** means race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, disability, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, veteran status, membership or activity in a local commission, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

# BIAS INCIDENT REPORTING



\*Additional University employees, including senior-level administrative officers, will be notified as necessary. Matters involving faculty and staff will likely include notification of and involvement by relevant academic and Human Resources employees.



## How does a student report a bias incident?

Students are asked to report bias incidents using the online reporting system available through the [Bias Incident Report](#) link. A student may also choose to seek assistance as needed with a St. Thomas professional where the incident occurred. For example, if an incident occurs in a residence hall, alert a staff member in Residence Life. Additionally, contacting Public Safety immediately allows for the securing of possible evidence and the beginning of a possible investigation, if necessary.

The report will be directed to and reviewed by the AVP for Equity Compliance, the Dean of Students and/or designee, the Director of Public Safety and/or designee, and the AVP for Inclusive Excellence.

The following senior-level administrative officers may also be notified depending on the nature of the report, including:

- Office of the President
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Provost
- Dean of Students
- Executive Director of Student Engagement and Inclusion
- Director of Human Resources
- Executive Director of the Center for Well Being
- Deans of the Graduate and Professional schools

Additional information is available for students at [the Bias or Hate Reporting link through the Dean of Students Office.](#)

### **Are students required to report bias incidents?**

No. A student who believes they have been or are being subjected to a bias incident may choose whether or not they would like to file a bias report. Students may also choose to address the behavior through direct communication, though under no circumstances are they required to do so. Students may seek out support from trusted St. Thomas employees in determining next steps. Students should be aware that all St. Thomas supervisors are required to report incidents or allegations of unlawful discrimination, hate crimes, or harassment.

### **What should a student do if the incident occurred in the residence halls?**

Students can inform their Resident Advisor (RA), Hall Director or Community Director if a bias incident has occurred in their residence hall in order to ensure support for the student communities residing in the building. Students can also report to Public Safety and submit a bias report via the online system. Residence Life will provide direct support to the student/s directly impacted by the incident.

### **What if the bias incident happens online or through a social media channel?**

Students can report any bias related incident that occurs online or on social media and that specifically targets individuals or groups affiliated with St. Thomas in the same way as they report on campus activity.

### **How are incidents responded to and what are the outcomes?**

The individuals identified above will review all bias incident reports, investigate the reports as needed to gather relevant facts, and take whatever responsive actions determined to be appropriate. The Dean of Students Office and/or Residence Life will also provide additional support as needed. If an investigation occurs and reflects a possible violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the conduct process will be followed by the Dean of Students Office and/or Residence Life.

In the event that an incident reaches the level of a conduct board, a student representative will be a member of the conduct board and will participate in the review of the case.

Bias incidents reportedly conducted by faculty are reviewed and addressed by the AVP for Equity Compliance in coordination with the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs the relevant dean or other appropriate academic officer, and, where appropriate, Human Resources. Bias incidents reportedly conducted by university staff are reviewed and addressed by the AVP for Equity Compliance in coordination with Human Resources and the appropriate supervisor(s).

Any incidents related to [Title IX](#) will be reviewed and addressed by the Title IX Coordinator.

Potential sanctions for students found responsible for violating the student conduct code in relation to a bias report may include the following:

- Reparative, restorative educational sanctions
- Formal Warning, Formal Reprimand, Conduct Probation
- Removal from the residence halls and/or campus, Suspension, or Expulsion
- Financial sanctions for replacement or repair of St. Thomas or personal property.

If a bias incident involves criminal conduct, law enforcement may be contacted.

Bias incidents that do not rise to the level of a policy violation may still be addressed utilizing restorative justice or other educational means.

### **How will the campus community know of the outcome and adjudication of the case?**

The university will communicate with the individual or individuals who reported the case and who were impacted by the incident. Though specifics of the outcome may not be shared, the response manager will share periodic status updates as well as information that an investigation has concluded (where relevant) and a written notice of outcome. Support will be offered to anyone who may need additional assistance.

### **What resources are available on campus to assist students after a bias related incident?**

Because St. Thomas believes that addressing bias related incidents is a community effort, students are encouraged to seek guidance and advising from faculty and staff with whom they trust and have a working relationship. In addition, the University offers a number of resources to assist students.

- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers a variety of individual and group counseling sessions to provide support to students who have been affected by acts of intolerance. The Multicultural Counselor on staff also has individual appointments available and coordinates Racial Healing Circles programs for group conversations.
- [Campus Ministry](#) with the Office of Spirituality and the Office for Pastoral Care & Worship offer counseling and spiritual advising through the chaplains and staff for students of all faith backgrounds. They are also available to assist during emergencies and incidents on campus on an individual basis, as well as group discussions.
- [Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion Services \(SDIS\)](#): In collaboration with other offices in Student Affairs, the SDIS staff can offer individual advising for students and coordinate learning programs to address bias incidents on campus. The staff also can conduct small and large group discussions to help build community and support for students.

- **Residence Life:** The staff of Residence Life will provide services to support students after any incidents that are against our principles of community. Residence Life may also provide additional learning opportunities for the community.
- **Dean of Students Office:** The staff of the Dean of Students Office can discuss the process of the investigation and offer advising for students who may need support after a bias related incident, as well as coordinate efforts to assist students who are seeking any resources needed.

**What can staff in other areas of the University of St. Thomas do to help students after a bias-related incident?**

St. Thomas' commitment to our DEI efforts emphasizes that supporting students after a bias-related incident is viewed as a community effort in both response and care.

Staff are asked to speak with their supervisors to determine appropriate actions and programming needed after a bias-related incident.

Examples include:

- social media postings and campaigns to support students and members of the community
- training opportunities to facilitate open dialogue and educational forums related to acts of bias and learning response procedures
- town hall gatherings for community discussion and support
- increased office hours to meet with students and opening gathering spaces for planning meetings.
- use of University bulletin boards and digital images to show solidarity and support.

Staff in other departments may be able to provide additional resources that may prove helpful when creating responsive or proactive programming that responds to a bias-related incident. Consult with areas such as the Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion Services, the Dean of Students Office, and the Division of Student Affairs if additional advising, including possible facilitators, are needed.