

# BIAS RESPONSE PROTOCOL



**PREPARED BY:**

Bias Response Advisory Committee

Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Student Development

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# Executive Summary

*Minnesota West Community and Technical College is devoted to promoting a campus environment that encourages inclusiveness and mutual respect. Understanding the negative impacts that bias incidents have on people and the community, the Bias Response Advisory Committee has prepared a protocol for the Responding to Bias Incidents. This protocol, effective from February 2024, is set out to agree on a framework for dealing with incidents that are biased, providing swift, sensitive, and supportive responses. It underpins the fact that a campus atmosphere should prevail in which diversity is accepted and all members are safe and valued.*

*It starts with the definitions—the very areas where there should be a dividing line of bias incidents from all other forms of misconduct. It enhances the necessity for the college community to be in unison on accurate recognition and reporting. In this regard, several ways have been put in place by which the report is made, whether online or in person, which guarantees anonymity to the identity of the person making the report so that everyone is able to access the reporting channels. This is in a bid to create an enabling environment where each member of the community will always feel free to come forward with their experiences and see that something is done about them.*

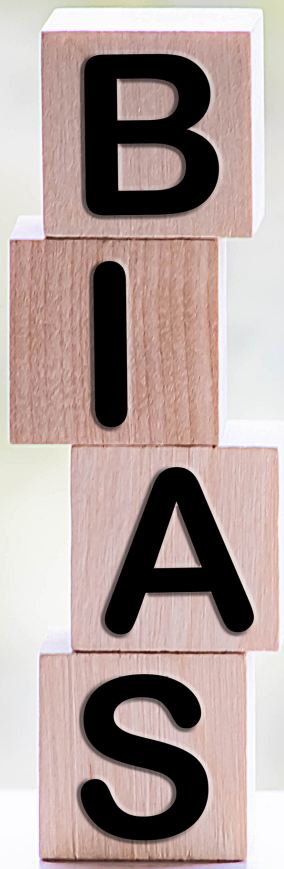
*Upon the receipt of such a report, the protocol lists immediate responses procedures to such incidents, which are designed to support affected individuals and assess the incident's severity. This includes caring for and providing resources to those affected, being discerning of the need to look into matters more thoroughly, and implementing measures to prevent a recurrence. At all times, confidentiality will be of paramount importance, and respect to all those involved is ensured. This protocol also provides the process of inquiry and resolution of disputes, which shows the involvement of the principal staff who play certain roles so as to see to it that the inquiry is comprehensive and fair to the situations.*

*Lastly, the protocol provides the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, which may also guarantee transparency and community participation. The college will continuously improve the practices and enhance the effectiveness of responses to bias incidents by the continuous review of it. This Bias Incident Response Protocol establishes the unwavering commitment of Minnesota West Community and Technical College to elevate the values of diversity, inclusion, and mutual respect in making the campus a place where everyone is able to feel welcome.*

**Minnesota West Community and Technical College**  
**Bias Response Advisory Committee**

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# Bias Incident Response

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## Zero Tolerance to All Forms of Biases

The Bias Incident Response Protocol is designed to provide a comprehensive framework for Minnesota West Community and Technical College to effectively respond to bias incidents within the campus community. The protocol aims to ensure that incidents of bias are addressed promptly, support affected individuals, and foster an inclusive and respectful environment for all students, faculty, and staff. A bias incident refers to any act or

behavior that targets an individual or group based on their actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any other protected characteristic. Bias incidents may include but are not limited to offensive language, derogatory comments, slurs, harassment, intimidation, vandalism, or any other form of discriminatory behavior.

# Definitions

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## **Offensive Language**

Use of derogatory or abusive language that demeans or belittles an individual or group based on their protected characteristics. Generally, it is the receiver who decides if they find the language offensive, based on their personal experiences, cultural background, and the context in which the words are used.

## **Derogatory Comments**

Making negative or disparaging remarks targeting someone's race, color, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics.

## **Harassment**

Engaging in unwelcome and discriminatory conduct, such as persistent intimidation, threats, or unwanted actions directed at someone due to their protected characteristics.

## **Intimidation**

Acting in a manner that instills fear, creates a hostile environment, or threatens the well-being of individuals based on their protected characteristics.

## **Slurs**

Employing derogatory terms or epithets to demean or insult individuals based on their identity or background.

## **Vandalism**

Damaging or defacing property, such as graffiti or destruction of personal belongings, with symbols, messages, or actions intended to express bias or discrimination.

## **Discriminatory Behavior**

Engaging in actions that treat individuals unfairly or differentially based on their protected characteristics, limiting their access to opportunities, rights, or privileges available to others.

## **Campus Community**

A collective group of individuals who are part of the college environment. This includes students, faculty, administration, staff, and often local residents who interact with or are affected by the college.

## **A Bias Incident**

A bias incident refers to any act or behavior that targets an individual or group based on their actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any other protected characteristic.



# Reporting Bias Incidents

Minnesota West Community and Technical College encourages all individuals who witness or experience a bias incident to report it within 24 hours of occurrence. Reporting can be done through various channels, such as those listed below.

The college will ensure that the reporting process is sensitive, supportive, and respects the privacy of individuals involved. Measures will be taken to protect individuals who report bias incidents from retaliation. College employees are mandated reporters. All reporting avenues will gather the same information / use the same form:

The College strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports or participates in the investigation of a bias incident. Acts of retaliation will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the institution.



## HOW? Two Ways

### Online

Minnesota West provides an online reporting form on the college's website. This form offers a user-friendly platform where individuals can provide detailed information about the bias incident, they witnessed or experienced. The online reporting form allows individuals to confidentially document essential details, such as the date, time, location, incident description, and the involved parties' identities if known. This option offers a straightforward and efficient way to report bias incidents.

### In-person

Directly communicate with faculty, staff, administrators, advisors, etc. Minnesota West encourages individuals to directly communicate with Minnesota West personnel to report bias incidents. This can be done by reaching out to individuals in the college community who will assist in documenting and addressing the incident. The staff or faculty member is responsible for accurately documenting the incident by filling out the online form on behalf of the student, capturing all pertinent details such as the date, time, location, and nature of the bias incident.

# Initial Response

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## Acknowledgment, Documentation, and Assessments

*Upon receiving a bias incident report, Minnesota West Community and Technical College understands the importance of promptly acknowledging the receipt of the report and documenting all relevant details. This step is crucial in ensuring that the incident is taken seriously and the college can initiate an appropriate response.*

*Handling the documentation sensitively, maintaining confidentiality, and adhering to relevant privacy laws and regulations is crucial. Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis, respecting the individuals' privacy. All Minnesota State Colleges and Universities policies will be followed.*

*The following process will be followed:*

### **Acknowledgment of Receipt**

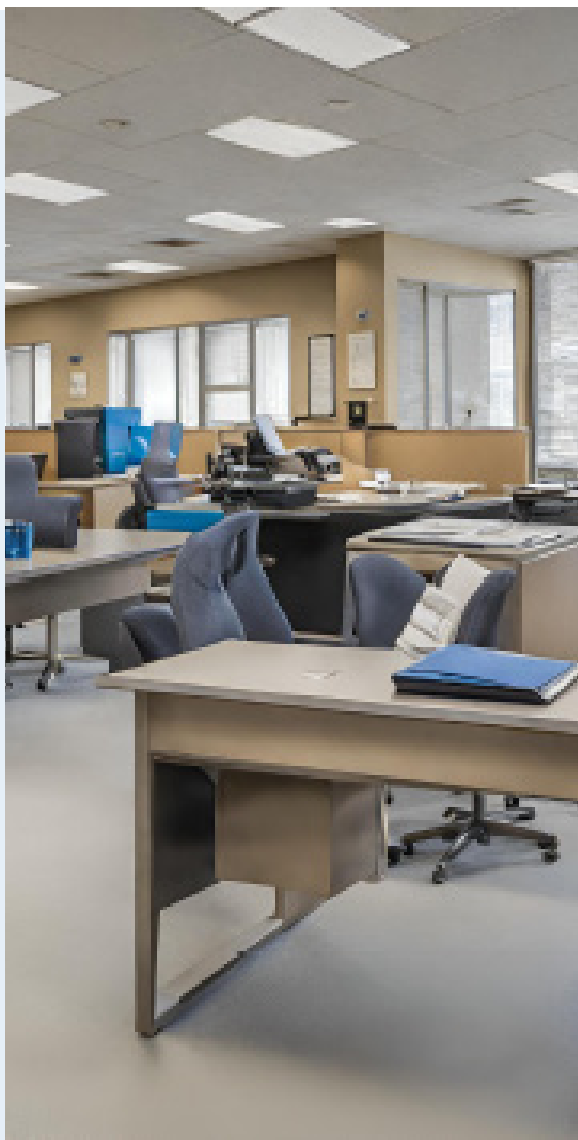
The college acknowledges the receipt of the report 24-48 hours. This acknowledgment serves to reassure the reporting individual that their report has been received and is being taken seriously. It helps to establish trust, confidence, and a sense of support for the person reporting the incident. It also provides additional contact information for future follow-up.

### **Prompt Documentation**

The college's bias response team promptly documents all relevant details related to a bias incident, creating a comprehensive record, preserving information, providing investigation support, and demonstrating accountability and compliance. This process ensures accuracy, clarity, and support in the response process, aiding in the investigation of the incident. Documentation also serves as a foundation for further investigation and demonstrates the college's commitment to addressing bias incidents.

### **Initial Assessment**

Minnesota West Community and Technical College conducts an initial assessment after receiving a report of a bias incident. This assessment evaluates the severity, potential impact, context, and response required. It may involve collaboration with stakeholders like senior administrators, campus security, Minnesota State HR and Legal departments, or student support services. This process ensures a thoughtful and informed approach to addressing bias incidents.



# Support for Affected Individuals

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Minnesota West Community and Technical College recognizes the importance of prioritizing the well-being of individuals affected by bias incidents. The college is committed to providing comprehensive care and support to those individuals, ensuring they receive the necessary assistance to navigate the incident's aftermath. Here's a further explanation of the care and support provided.



## Connecting with Counseling Services

The college understands that bias incidents can significantly impact the emotional well-being of affected individuals. To address this, Minnesota West ensures those affected have access to counseling services. Trained professionals can provide support, guidance, and a safe space for individuals to process their experiences, cope with any emotional distress, and develop strategies for resilience.

## Resources for Emotional Well-being

The college offers resources to promote emotional well-being and resilience. These resources may include workshops, seminars, or educational materials focusing on self-care, mental health awareness, coping strategies, and resilience. The college empowers individuals to prioritize their mental and emotional well-being by providing these resources.



## Providing Academic Support

Bias incidents can also affect academic performance and engagement. Minnesota West recognizes this and offers academic support to individuals affected by bias incidents. This may include providing extensions on assignments, facilitating academic accommodations, or connecting affected individuals with tutoring services to help them navigate their academic responsibilities during a potentially challenging time.

## Access to Support Systems

Minnesota West ensures that affected individuals have access to other necessary support systems within the college community. This may involve connecting individuals with appropriate student organizations, advisors, or affinity groups that can provide additional support and a sense of belonging. The college fosters an environment where individuals affected by bias incidents can seek out and access the support systems that best meet their needs.





# Confidentiality

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*Minnesota West Community and Technical College emphasizes confidentiality to support individuals impacted by bias incidents, ensuring a safe and trusted environment for seeking help.*

## **Legal Considerations**

Minnesota West adheres to legal regulations, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of personal information.

## **Limited Disclosure on a Need-to-Know Basis**

The college restricts information sharing on bias incidents to those directly involved, respecting privacy and limiting disclosure to those necessary for support or investigation purposes.

## **Consent**

Minnesota West ensures informed consent and disclosure of information to affected individuals, ensuring transparency and allowing them to make informed decisions about their participation and disclosure.

## **DISCRETION, PRIVACY, AND TRUST**

# Investigation and Resolution

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*Minnesota West Community and Technical College is committed to conducting a thorough, fair, and impartial investigation into reported bias incidents, aiming to gather relevant information and make informed decisions.*

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## Gathering Evidence

The investigation begins by gathering evidence related to the reported bias incident, including written statements, photographs, videos, and other materials, to establish a clear understanding and corroborate the accounts provided by the involved individuals.

02

## Interviewing Witnesses

The college conducts fair, unbiased interviews with witnesses to gather their perspective information, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the incident and the overall investigation.

03

## Reviews and Analysis

To determine accuracy, the investigation may involve a comprehensive examination of relevant documents and materials, including policies, codes of conduct, surveillance footage, and/or electronic communications

04

## Impartiality and Objectivity

Minnesota West maintains impartiality and objectivity in its investigations, avoiding personal biases and focusing on accurate information, understanding all parties' perspectives, and reaching a fair conclusions

05

## Timely Completion

Minnesota West conducts investigations efficiently, ensuring thorough examination of facts for prompt resolution. This prompts appropriate actions, including disciplinary measures or supportive interventions.

# Disciplinary Action

*Minnesota West Community and Technical College will take appropriate disciplinary actions in cases of bias incidents, aiming to address misconduct, promote accountability, and ensure a safe campus environment.*

## Available Tools

			
<b>POLICY 3.6 STUDENT CONDUCT</b>	<b>1B.1: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NONDISCRIMINATORY IN EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION</b>	<b>1B.3 SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY</b>	<b>PROCEDURE 1C.0.1 EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT</b>

## Possible Resolutions/Outcomes

	Education/ Training	Counseling	Community Service	Probation	Suspension	Expulsion
<b>Objectives</b>	To promote awareness	To address underlying social, cultural, and/or health issues	Contributing positively to the campus community	To improve behavior	The temporary removal from the college campus for a specified period of time.	The permanent dismissal of a student from an educational institution.
	To appreciate diversity					
	To develop cultural competency		To foster a sense of responsibility	To Comply with college policies		

# Communication

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Minnesota West Community and Technical College prioritizes timely updates on the investigation and actions taken in response to a reported bias incident.



## Affected Individuals

Minnesota West prioritizes communication with individuals affected by bias incidents by providing updates on investigations, reassurance, and support to foster inclusivity and support.



## Campus Community

Minnesota West promotes inclusivity by providing timely updates to the broader campus community about incidents, fostering awareness, and encouraging collective responsibility for a respectful environment.



## Stakeholders

Minnesota West provides timely updates to relevant stakeholders, including faculty, staff, student organizations, and advisory boards, to address bias incidents on campus, promoting collaboration and coordination. Each group will receive such communication appropriately.

*Minnesota West ensures transparency and accountability in addressing bias incidents by providing clear, transparent updates without compromising privacy. They maintain confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, keeping stakeholders informed and engaged. Regular communication fosters trust, community, and confidence among stakeholders, contributing to a safe, supportive, and respectful campus environment.*



# Monitoring and Evaluation

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*Minnesota West Community and Technical College is committed to implementing a systematic approach to monitor bias incidents, outcomes, and trends, enabling informed decision-making and prevention measures.*

## **Monitoring System**

The college implements a systematic monitoring system to track bias incidents, ensuring consistency and accuracy in data collection, identification of involved parties, disciplinary actions, and supportive measures.

## **Tracking Outcomes**

Minnesota West monitors bias incidents' outcomes to assess response strategies, including disciplinary actions, support services, and educational initiatives, enabling informed decision-making on improvements or adjustments.

**Analyzing Trends:** The college analyzes data on bias incidents to identify trends, patterns, and potential concerns, aiding in understanding root causes, developing targeted interventions, and implementing proactive measures.

## **Feedback and Improvement**

The system encourages stakeholder feedback, enhancing the Bias Incident Response Protocol's responsiveness to campus community needs and incorporating evolving best practices.

## **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE**

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## MINNESOTA STATE

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A member of Minnesota State*

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