

Harassment Policy

Statement of Philosophy

Gettysburg College is committed to treating all members of the College community in an equitable manner, providing an environment that permits students to attain their educational goals without interference stemming from harassment. Gettysburg College explicitly prohibits any form of illegal harassment by any College community member, organization or group.

Policy Definition

Harassment includes any written, verbal or physical acts (including electronically transmitted acts) that are reasonably perceived as creating an intimidating, or hostile work, learning or living environment, particularly if questionable behavior is repeated and/or if it continues after the offending party is informed of the objectionable and/or inappropriate nature of the behavior. Harassment is based on protected classes which are listed on the cover page of the Student Handbook. Some of the classes recognized by Gettysburg College may not be protected under law. Harassment can be a single, serious incident or a series of related, repeated incidents. Harassment is measured by the impact of the behavior, rather than the intent of the harasser.

Examples of Harassment

Might include but are not limited to:

- ▮ Making repeated suggestive or derogatory comments, jokes, or gestures about someone's actual or perceived identity/expression, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or ability status. This can include comments indirectly related to the person's group membership, such as comments about ethnic food, body shape or appearance, or derogatory slang.
- ▮ Unwelcome staring, or advances, or persistent, unwanted contact such as repeated requests to meet or talk, or refusing to accept that a consensual relationship has ended by following, phoning, watching, etc. (This conduct can be so severe as to constitute stalking, which is a criminal act).

- ‡ Displaying or distributing racist, sexist or homophobic graffiti, cartoons, posters, email, screen-savers, etc.
- ‡ Ridiculing or mimicking a person's accent or speech impediment.
- ‡ Cyber-harassment (including harassment via social media, email, text, or other forms of electronic communication).

Personal Harassment and Bullying

Although bullying may not rise to the level of harassment, the College believes that these behaviors are inappropriate and inconsistent with our mission. In addition, these are hurtful behaviors that interfere with the right for those in our community to live in an environment conducive to learning. Bullying is unwelcome or unreasonable behavior that demeans, offends, or humiliates people either as individuals or as a group. Bullying behavior is often persistent and part of a pattern, but it can also occur as a single incident. It is usually carried out by an individual but can also be an aspect of group behavior.

“Mobbing” is a particular type of bullying behavior carried out by a group rather than by an individual. Mobbing is the bullying or social isolation of a person through collective unjustified accusations, humiliation, general harassment, or emotional abuse.

Although it is group behavior, specific incidents such as an insult or a practical joke may be carried out by an individual as part of mobbing behavior.

Examples of Bullying

Performed alone or in a group might include but are not limited to:

- ‡ Name calling, insults, physical gestures.
- ‡ Playing hurtful or malicious jokes to embarrass.
- ‡ Encouraging others to exclude socially someone; spreading rumors or lying that damages someone's social reputation or social acceptance.
- ‡ Cyber-bullying (including bullying via social media, email, text, or other forms of electronic communication).

Process

Harassment and some forms of bullying are a violation of the Community Standards and the College will investigate such incidents to determine if someone has violated our policy. Students found responsible are subject to College sanctions. Any student who believes they are being subjected to these offenses (including, but not limited to, sexual harassment) should report to Campus Safety at [\(717\)337-6911](tel:(717)337-6911), or the Vice President for College Life and Dean of Students at [\(717\)337-6921](tel:(717)337-6921) or at

www.gettysburg.edu/reportconcern.

- ▮ The most effective way to stop harassment or bullying is to confront it immediately and directly. If it is safe to do so, clearly and firmly tell the person who is harassing you to stop. Describe the way you expect to be treated. This communication can take many forms, including a warning delivered in person or in writing.
- ▮ If saying ‘no’ does not stop the offensive behavior, or if you cannot say ‘no’ because you fear the consequences, it is time to seek help.
- ▮ Do not rely on your memory. Carefully record the details of the harassment as soon as it occurs (dates, times, locations, witnesses, what was said and your response, etc.). Record any attempts to tell the person that the behavior is unwelcomed. Keep all letters, gifts, emails, voicemails, text, tweets, wall post, etc. that you receive.

It is a violation of the Community Standards to engage in harassment or to retaliate against anyone bringing a complaint of harassment, formal or informal, anyone involved in the complaint process, or anyone participating in an investigation into allegations of harassment (including witnesses).

Impact and Consequences

The impact of harassment or bullying on both harassers and harassed persons can be severe. It can harm them physically, emotionally, and socially. It can adversely affect careers and academic performance.

Engaging in harassing behavior can result in disciplinary action. This action may include, but is not limited to, reprimand, relocation, suspension, expulsion and dismissal.

If You Are Accused of Bullying or Harassment...

Take the accusation seriously. If someone complains to you that your actions or comments are unwelcome, offensive or harassing, listen closely. Remember that people with different values or backgrounds may experience behaviors as humiliating, threatening, or insulting what you intended to be funny or harmless. Remember also that your body language and tone of voice contributes to the impact of your words and actions.

If you believe the complaint is fair, (and there are no restrictions in place to prevent contact) you may want to apologize for the discomfort or offense you caused.

Do not act in ways that could be seen as retaliation or “getting back” at the complainant or others. Avoid any behavior that could embarrass or intimidate the person you have allegedly harassed.

Review your rights and seek advice. Contact the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities at (717)337-6998 for information and advice, and/or contact Counseling Services at (717)337-6960.