

# Bias Incident

## If it happens at your school...

An act directed against a person, group, or property, expressing hostility or bias on the basis of perceived or actual gender, race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, gender expression, religion, disability, size or age.\*  
—Providence College

**1 SECURE**  
Ensure the safety of the victim and the community of students the bias was directed against.

**2 INVESTIGATE**  
Swiftly and seriously respond to all bias complaints/tips. Get all the facts early to determine a school-wide or community-wide response.

**3 PRESERVE EVIDENCE**  
Take photos; do not delete or discard anything. If it may be a crime, do not disturb the scene. You are not the police.

*NOTE: A bias incident may qualify as a hate crime under state and/or federal law. By definition, all hate crimes are bias incidents but not all bias incidents are hate crimes. If you think a bias incident that happened in your school may be a crime, you are advised to contact your local authorities for assistance.*

## Contact

**4 YOUR COMMUNITY**  
Upon the first suspicions of bias, contact your local and/or statewide advocacy organizations representing the targeted student population. The school should be guided by the affected community's firsthand knowledge of the bias; this will ensure that the school is supporting the targeted community effectively and that the school understands the best ways to assist.

For additional support, you can also contact:

**1) Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) within 180 days to file a complaint, request assistance, report harassment or a hate crime. Call 1-800-482-3604 or visit [www.michigan.gov/MDCR](http://www.michigan.gov/MDCR) and click "How We Can Help."**

**2) Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at 313-965-2323.**

**3) U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Unit at 313-226-9151.**

**4) Southern Poverty Law Center at <http://www.splcenter.org/reporthat> to add to the national reports being tracked here.**

**5 DENOUNCE THE BIAS/HATE**  
Remain firmly in support of the victim, the targeted student population and the larger marginalized community represented by the students.

**6 BE OBJECTIVE**  
When speaking about the offender, focus on justice, fairness and not blame.

**7 ADVOCATE**  
Use the bias incident to encourage school and community learning, unity, and growth toward fighting bias.

\*Adapted from the tolerance.org Teaching Tolerance article titled "Identifying and Responding to Bias Incidents" ([www.tolerance.org/professional-development/identifying-and-responding-to-bias-incidents](http://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/identifying-and-responding-to-bias-incidents)) and from Providence College's bias response protocol, ([www.providence.edu/student-affairs/bias-response/Pages/key-definitions.aspx](http://www.providence.edu/student-affairs/bias-response/Pages/key-definitions.aspx)).

Revised 1-9-18



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