

Bennington College Sexual and Interpersonal Misconduct Policy

A. INTRODUCTION

Statement Of Nondiscrimination

Bennington College does not discriminate and prohibits discrimination against any individual based on any category protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws.

Accordingly, Bennington College does not discriminate, and strictly prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), gender, gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, citizenship, genetic information or predisposing genetic characteristics, marital status, familial status, domestic violence victim status, caregiver status, military status, including past, current, or prospective service in the uniformed services, or any other category or characteristic protected by applicable law. When brought to the attention of the College, sex discrimination will be appropriately addressed by the College according to the procedures below, and discrimination on the basis of any other protected category will be addressed in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements. For more information, please review the [Nondiscrimination Statement](#).

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Bennington College does not discriminate in its admissions practices except as permitted by law, in its employment practices, or in its educational programs or activities on the basis of sex. As a recipient of federal financial assistance for education activities, Bennington College is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to ensure that all of its education programs and activities do not discriminate on the basis of sex. Discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination on the basis of sex stereotypes, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and pregnancy or related conditions.

Bennington College has obligations under Title IX to provide certain support and modifications to people experiencing pregnancy or related conditions in order to ensure their equal access to Bennington College's program or activity. For example, Bennington College must treat pregnancy or related conditions in the same manner and under the same policies as any other temporary medical conditions and must allow voluntary leaves of absence.

Students, employees, or applicants should contact the Title IX Coordinator for more information. Employees or applicants may also contact Human Resources for more information because additional workplace laws and policies apply.

Pregnancy or related conditions include pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation; medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation; and recovery from pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related medical conditions.

Bennington College also prohibits retaliation against any person because they have opposed sex discrimination or participated in any sex discrimination investigation or complaint process, whether internal or external to the institution. Sex-based harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking on the basis of sex are forms of sex discrimination, which are prohibited under Title IX and by Bennington College policy.

Application of Section 504/Americans with Disabilities Act to this Policy

In both practice and policy, Bennington College adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended 2008 (ADAAA); Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and all other federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability.

Parties may request reasonable accommodations for disclosed disabilities to the Title IX Coordinator at any point relating to the implementation of this policy, including making a disclosure or report, and initiating a grievance procedure. An accommodation will be granted if it is reasonable and does not fundamentally alter the process. The Title IX Coordinator will not affirmatively provide disability accommodations that have not been specifically requested by the parties, even where the parties may be receiving accommodations in other Bennington College programs and activities. With the consent of the impacted student or employee, the Title IX Coordinator will work collaboratively with the Director of Student Accessibility Services to ensure that approved reasonable accommodations (disability-related) are honored as applicable throughout any process related to this policy.

Purpose of this policy

This policy identifies and defines conduct prohibited under this policy and the process that will be used to respond to allegations of Prohibited Conduct.

Bennington College will act on all notices of allegations of sex discrimination or retaliation as defined in this policy. It will take necessary measures to end conduct that is in violation of this policy, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effect on individuals and the community. Within

any process related to this policy, Bennington College provides reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities and reasonable religious accommodations, when such accommodations are consistent with state and federal law.

Situations involving other conduct that may be in violation of other Bennington College student or employee conduct policies should be reported to Student Life for matters involving students, or Human Resources or the Provost's Office for matters involving faculty or staff. Situations involving other conduct relating to nonaffiliates should be reported to Human Resources. When such other conduct is related to reported conduct that falls within the scope of this policy, the College will determine at its discretion whether to address such other conduct through this policy as well.

To Whom This policy Applies

This policy applies to all students and employees. This policy also applies to all other individuals participating or attempting to participate in Bennington College programs or activities, including Bennington College-sponsored events that take place off-campus. This policy applies to reports and complaints of conduct that allegedly occurred on or after August 1, 2024. In accordance with 2024 Title IX regulations, this policy does not apply retroactively. If the College receives a report of sexual and interpersonal misconduct that allegedly occurred prior to August 1, 2024, the College will apply the College policies and procedures that applied as of time of the alleged misconduct.

Members of the Bennington College community are expected to provide truthful information in any report, meeting, or proceeding under this policy.

Any respondent who is not a Bennington College student, faculty, or staff member is generally considered a third party. Bennington College's ability to take appropriate corrective action against a third party may be limited and will depend on the nature of the third party's relationship, if any, with Bennington College. When appropriate, the Title IX Coordinator will refer such allegations against third-party respondents to the appropriate office.

The status of a party may impact which resources and remedies are available to them, as described in this policy.

What is Prohibited by This policy

This policy prohibits sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, and retaliation as defined below. These acts shall also be referred to as Prohibited Conduct under this policy:

Discrimination on the Basis of Sex:

Discrimination is defined as treating members of a protected category less favorably because of their actual or perceived membership in that category or as having a policy or practice that adversely impacts the members of one protected category more than others. Discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination on the basis of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Sex-Based Harassment:

Sex-based harassment is a form of sex discrimination and means sexual harassment and other harassment on the basis of sex, including on the basis of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Sex-Based Harassment includes the following:

- a. Quid pro quo harassment: An employee, agent, or other person authorized by Bennington College to provide an aid, benefit, or service under the College's education program or activity explicitly or impliedly conditioning the provision of such an aid, benefit, or service on a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.
- b. Hostile environment harassment: Unwelcome sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the College's education program or activity (i.e., creates a hostile environment). Whether a hostile environment has been created is a fact-specific inquiry that includes consideration of the following:
 - The degree to which the conduct affected the complainant's ability to access Bennington College's education program or activity.
 - The type, frequency, and duration of the conduct.
 - The parties' ages, roles within the College's education program or activity, previous interactions, and other factors about a party that may be relevant to evaluating the effects of the conduct.
 - The location of the conduct and the context in which the conduct occurred; and
 - Other sex-based harassment in the College's education program or activity.
- c. Under applicable provisions of Vermont law, an additional standard for prohibited hostile environment harassment applies in the specific context of an employee complainant who is working in a Bennington College program or activity in Vermont. Under this standard: to "harass" means to engage in unwelcome conduct based on an employee complainant's protected characteristic(s) that interferes with the employee's work or creates a work environment that is intimidating, hostile or offensive. In determining whether conduct

constitutes harassment: (A) The determination will be made on the basis of the information gathered in an investigation as a whole, according to the totality of the circumstances, and a single incident may constitute unlawful harassment; (B) Incidents that may be harassment will be considered in the aggregate with varying types of conduct and conduct based on multiple characteristics viewed in totality rather than in isolation; (C) Conduct may constitute harassment, regardless of whether: (i) the complaining employee is the individual being harassed; (ii) the complaining employee acquiesced or otherwise submitted to or participated in the conduct; (iii) the conduct is also experienced by others outside the protected class involved in the conduct; (iv) the complaining employee was able to continue carrying out the employee's job duties and responsibilities despite the conduct; (v) the conduct resulted in a physical or psychological injury; or (vi) the conduct occurred outside the workplace. Harassment need not be severe or pervasive to constitute prohibited harassment under this standard, but behavior that a reasonable employee with the same protected characteristic(s) would consider to be a petty slight or trivial inconvenience will not constitute harassment in violation of this Policy.

- d. Sexual assault: an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Specifically, this includes:

Rape¹—The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or because of their temporary or permanent mental incapacity.

Fondling—The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or because of their temporary or permanent mental incapacity.

Incest—Sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.

Statutory Rape—Sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent.

- e. Dating violence: violence committed by a person:

¹ Both completed and attempted rape are prohibited by this policy.

- Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
- Where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
 1. The length of the relationship.
 2. The type of relationship; and
 3. The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

Emotional and psychological abuse do not constitute violence for the purposes of this definition.

- f. Domestic violence: felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a person who:
- o Is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction where the conduct occurs, or a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim.
 - o Is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner.
 - o Shares a child in common with the victim; or
 - o Commits acts against a youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction where the conduct occurs.

Emotional and psychological abuse do not constitute violence for the purposes of this definition.

- g. Stalking: Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or suffer substantial emotional distress. Please note: stalking prohibited by this policy encompasses stalking that is, and is not, on the basis of sex.
- h. Sexual coercion: The application of unreasonable pressure, including emotionally or physically manipulative actions or statements, or direct or implied threats, in order to compel the person to engage in sexual activity.
- i. Sexual exploitation is the abuse or exploitation of another person's sexuality without consent, for the perpetrator's own advantage or benefit, or for the benefit or advantage of anyone other than the one being exploited. Sexual Exploitation includes, without limitation, causing or attempting to cause the incapacitation of another person in order to gain a sexual advantage over that person; causing the prostitution of another person; electronically recording, photographing, or transmitting intimate or sexual utterances, sounds or images of another person without that person's consent; allowing third parties to observe sexual acts without any person's consent; engaging in voyeurism; distributing intimate or sexual

information about another person; and/or knowingly transmitting a sexually transmitted infection, including HIV, to another person.

Consensual Relationships

Because of their potential to damage the bonds of mutual trust and responsibility upon which the Bennington community depends, sexual or dating relationships between faculty and students, as well as between staff and students, are prohibited at all times and in all circumstances except those described immediately below, even if the relationship is consensual and regardless of the age of the student. Recent Bennington College graduates who are hired in a staff role and who have an existing dating or sexual relationship with a current student may be exempted from this policy if they have no supervisory or functional staff role with the student and where the College, in its sole discretion, determines that such is not a conflict of interest or in conflict with the best interests of the student; however, they must inform both Human Resources and their hiring manager of the existing relationship before they are hired. Failure to abide by this policy will result in discipline of the faculty or staff member, up to and including dismissal from employment at the College.

Retaliation:

Retaliation means intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any person by the College or an individual Respondent, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by this Policy, or because the person has reported information, made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this Policy and/or the voluntary informal resolution processes described in this Policy; provided, however, that if the College decides to require an employee or other person authorized to provide aid, benefit, or service under the College's education program or activity to participate as a witness in, or otherwise assist with, an investigation, proceeding or hearing under this policy, that will not constitute retaliation. Retaliation prohibited by this Policy includes retaliation by a respondent or respondents against a peer (i.e., student-student or employee-employee retaliation).

Good faith actions lawfully pursued in response to a report of Prohibited Conduct are not Retaliation.

Delegation of Duties Under This policy

Obligations in this policy assigned to a particular title, such as the Title IX Coordinator, may be designated as appropriate by Bennington College, including to external professionals.

Academic Freedom

Bennington College is dedicated to an uncompromising standard of academic excellence and an unwavering commitment to academic freedom, freedom of inquiry, and freedom of expression in the search for truth. This policy and its procedures are not intended to inhibit or restrict free expression or exchange of ideas, abridge academic freedom, or prohibit educational content or discussions inside or outside of the classroom that include germane, but controversial or sensitive subject matters protected by academic freedom.

Members of the Bennington College community are free to express their views on any academic subject — regardless of whether those viewpoints are provocative or controversial. Before proceeding with or continuing an investigation of any report of harassment or retaliation that involves an individual's speech or other communication, Bennington College will take care to distinguish between protected speech and hostile environment harassment. The Title IX Coordinator will take action as needed to restore or preserve a person's access to Bennington College's education program or activity.

Title IX Coordinator

Bennington College is committed to promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive working and learning environment free from sex discrimination. The Title IX Coordinator is charged with monitoring compliance with Title IX; providing education and training; and coordinating Bennington College's investigation, response, and resolution of all reports of Prohibited Conduct under this policy. The Title IX Coordinator acts with independence and authority and oversees all resolutions under this policy free from bias and conflicts of interest. The Title IX Coordinator is available to meet with any Student, Employee, or other individual to discuss this policy or the accompanying procedures and can be contacted at:

Alfredo Medina, Jr., Ph.D.

VP of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, College Diversity Officer and Title IX Coordinator

alfredomedina@bennington.edu

Conflicts of Interest or Bias

Any individual carrying out any part of this policy shall be free from any actual conflict of interest or demonstrated bias that would impact the handling of a matter. Should the Title IX Coordinator have a conflict of interest, the Title IX Coordinator will reassign their duties for purposes of carrying out the handling and finalization of the matter at issue. Should any investigator, Decisionmaker, or Appeals Officer have a conflict of interest, the investigator, Decisionmaker, or Appeals Officer is to notify the Title IX Coordinator upon discovery of the conflict so that the Title IX Coordinator may reassign the role as appropriate. This policy will note where parties have the opportunity to challenge the participation of any individual implementing this policy based on actual conflict of interest or demonstrated bias.

Crime and Incident Disclosure Obligations

The Clery Act is a federal crime and incident disclosure law. It requires, among other things, that Bennington College report the number of incidents of certain crimes, including some of the Prohibited Conduct in this policy, which occur in particular campus-related locations. The Clery Act also requires Bennington College to issue a timely warning to the community in certain circumstances.

In the statistical disclosures and timely warnings to the community, Bennington College will ensure that a complainant's name and other identifying information is not disclosed. The Coordinator will refer information to the Clery Officer (Director of Campus Safety) when appropriate for a determination about Clery-related actions, such as recording, logging and disclosing crime statistics or sending timely warnings.

B. REPORTING SEX DISCRIMINATION, INCLUDING SEX-BASED HARASSMENT

Employee Reporting Obligations

Bennington College believes it is important to be proactive in taking reasonable steps to identify and prevent incidents of sex discrimination. All employees, with the limited exception of employees identified specifically by the College as Confidential Resources, are required to promptly provide to the Title IX Coordinator all complaints or reports of sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, and share with the Title IX Coordinator all information reported or made available to the employee.

Researchers conducting an IRB-approved human subjects research study designed to gather information about sex discrimination are not required to report to the Title IX Coordinator disclosures made in the course of that study to the Title IX Coordinator.

Bennington College also encourages employees who themselves experience sex discrimination to bring their concerns to the Title IX Coordinator, though they are not required to do so.

When providing this information to the Title IX Coordinator, the employee must include their own name and contact information, and all known details about an incident, which may include, if known, the dates, times, locations, names of involved individuals and the nature of the incident.

In addition, certain employees of Bennington College are considered by law to be mandatory reporters of child abuse, elder abuse or abuse of persons with disabilities. These Bennington College employees are required by law to report incidents of abuse to the [Department of Child and Family Services](#) in the state of Vermont.

Public Awareness Events

Employees are required to report to the Title IX Coordinator information about sex discrimination they learn about at public awareness events such as Take Back the Night, but the Title IX Coordinator will not reach out in such instances. The Title IX Coordinator is not obligated to respond directly to any identified complainant in a report of sex-based harassment disclosed at a public awareness event that takes place on-campus or in a College-sponsored online platform unless there is an imminent and serious threat to someone's health or safety. The Title IX Coordinator must respond to reports of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination other than sex-based harassment if disclosed at public awareness events, wherever they occur. In all cases the Bennington College will use the information to inform its efforts to prevent sex-based harassment, including by providing tailored training to address alleged sex-based harassment in a particular part of its education program or activity or at a specific location when information indicates there may be multiple incidents of sex-based harassment.

How to Make a Report to Bennington College

All complaints of violations of this policy will be taken seriously. The Title IX Coordinator will provide information and guidance regarding how to file a complaint with the Bennington College and/or local law enforcement, as well as information and assistance about what course of action may best support the individual(s) involved and how best to address the complaint.

Every reasonable effort will be made to maintain the privacy of those making a report to the extent possible. In all cases, Bennington College will give consideration to the party bringing forward a report with respect to how the matter is pursued. The College may, when necessary to protect the community, initiate an investigation or take other actions in response to a report, even when the person identifying a concern chooses not to participate in a resolution process or requests that the Bennington College not initiate an investigation.

Employees, students, guests, or visitors who believe that this policy has been violated should promptly contact the Title IX Coordinator or another member of the Title IX Office as follows:

Title IX Coordinator	alfredomedina@bennington.edu
Title IX Assistant	tomjohnson@bennington.edu

There is no timeline for making a report of sex discrimination, however, Bennington College encourages the prompt reporting of a complaint as the ability of the Bennington College to pursue the complaint to conclusion may be hindered by the passage of time.

Amnesty

A reporting party or a witness who causes an investigation of sexual misconduct shall not be subject to a disciplinary sanction for a violation of the institution's student conduct policy related to the incident unless the institution determines that the report was not made in good faith or that the violation was egregious. An egregious violation shall include, but not be limited to, taking an action that places the health and safety of another person at risk.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Bennington College values the privacy of its students, employees, and other community members. Community members should be able to seek the assistance they need and access this policy without fear that the information they provide will be shared more broadly.

References made to privacy mean Bennington College offices and employees who cannot guarantee confidentiality, but will maintain privacy appropriately, relaying information as necessary to investigate or seek a resolution and to notify the Title IX Coordinator (who is responsible for tracking patterns and spotting systemic issues), while avoiding unnecessary disclosures.

All activities under these procedures shall be conducted with due regard of the privacy interests of those involved. While Bennington College will take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy of individuals involved in a complaint, it may be necessary to disclose some information to individuals or offices on campus in order to address a complaint or provide for the physical safety of an individual or the campus. Thus, Bennington College cannot, and does not, guarantee that all information related to complaints will be kept confidential.

In order to maintain the privacy of evidence gathered as part of any resolution process, access to materials under the procedures in this policy will be provided only by a secure method and parties and advisors are not permitted to make copies of any documents shared or make use of the documents outside of the processes described in this policy. Parties may request to review a hard copy of materials, and Bennington College will make that available in a supervised or monitored setting. Inappropriately sharing materials provided during this process may constitute retaliation under this policy.

Individuals may speak confidentially with a Confidential Resource. Confidential Resources (e.g., licensed mental health care providers, physicians, clergy) may not report to the Title IX Coordinator any identifying information about conduct that may violate Bennington College's policies against Prohibited Conduct without the consent of the individual who supplied the

information, unless required by law. Such disclosures will not be reported to the Title IX Coordinator or initiate any process under this policy.

The Bennington College employs two categories of employees, designated specifically as Confidential Resources, who are not required to report information about Prohibited Conduct to the Title IX Coordinator:

- Privileged and confidential employees whose communications are privileged or confidential under Federal or State law. The employee must be hired for and functioning within the scope of their duties to which the privilege or confidentiality applies. For example, physicians, clergy, and mental health counselors are all Confidential Resources. Disclosures made to these employees means that information cannot be disclosed to anyone internal or external to the College without the expressed permission from the individual disclosing the information.

State law requires professional counselors to report: (i) when a patient is likely to engage in conduct that would result in serious harm to the patient, others, or property; (ii) if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a minor has been sexually abused. These reports must be made to the [Vermont Department of Children and Families](#).

- Employees designated by the institution as exempt from reporting known Prohibited Conduct to the Title IX Coordinator and designated as Confidential Resources for the purpose of providing services to the campus community related to Prohibited Conduct. Such employees must be acting in the scope of that role when they learn of the information about Prohibited Conduct for this exemption to apply. For example, the ombudsperson and sexual assault advocates may be designated as Confidential Resources, exempt from internal reporting. Disclosures made to these employees means that information will not be shared with the Title IX Coordinator or anyone within the Bennington College but may be released under legal action or court order without the permission of the individual disclosing the information.

A list of resources can be found on the [Title IX Website](#) and is listed below:

Ali Tartaglia, DrPH
Associate Dean and Director of Integrative Wellness
alisontartaglia@bennington.edu

Steven Young
Associate Director of Outreach and Support, Case Manager
stevenyoung@bennington.edu

Reporting to the Police

Some Prohibited Conduct may constitute a violation of both the law and Bennington College policy. Bennington College encourages College community members to report alleged crimes promptly to local law enforcement agencies. All persons have the right to file with law enforcement, as well as the right to decline to file with law enforcement. The decision not to file shall not be considered as evidence that there was not a violation of Bennington College policy.

Criminal investigations may be useful in the gathering of relevant evidence, particularly forensic evidence. The standards for finding a violation of criminal law are different from the standards for finding a violation of this policy. Conduct may constitute Prohibited Conduct under this policy even if law enforcement agencies lack sufficient evidence of a crime and decline to prosecute.

Proceedings under this policy may be carried out prior to, simultaneously with, or following civil or criminal proceedings off campus. However, when a complaint is made to Bennington College as well as to law enforcement, Bennington College may delay its process if a law enforcement agency requests that the College delay its process for a reasonable amount of time to allow law enforcement to gather evidence of criminal misconduct. Criminal or legal proceedings are separate from the processes in this policy and do not determine whether this policy has been violated.

All investigations and hearings under this policy will be thorough, reliable and impartial, and will seek to collect evidence and names of witnesses to gather information that is directly or substantially relevant to whether the alleged policy violation occurred, and will not be based on the grounds that civil or criminal charges involving the same incident have been filed or that charges have been dismissed or reduced.

In the case of an emergency, where the physical well-being of a member of the Bennington College community or the safety of the College's campus is threatened, any individual with such knowledge should promptly inform the Director of Campus Safety.

C. RESPONDING TO A REPORT

The following process will be used following the receipt of a report of sex discrimination.

Initial Contact

Following receipt of a report alleging a potential violation of this policy, the Title IX Coordinator, or Title IX Assistant, will ask the complainant to meet with the Title IX Coordinator or Assistant for an initial intake and assessment meeting, and will provide the following:

- An invitation to meet to offer assistance and explain their rights, resources, and options under this policy.
- Access to this policy.

- Information regarding available campus and community resources for counseling, health care, mental health, and/or victim advocacy. Upon request, information regarding legal assistance, visa and immigration assistance, student financial aid and other available services may be provided.
- The availability of supportive measures regardless of whether a complaint is filed and/or any resolution is initiated.
- The options for resolution (no action, prevention, agreement, investigation) and how to initiate such resolution processes.
- The right to notify law enforcement as well as the right not to notify law enforcement.
- The importance of preserving evidence and, in the case of potential criminal misconduct, how to get assistance from Campus Safety or local law enforcement in preserving evidence.
- A statement that retaliation because someone has made a complaint or participated in the complaint process is prohibited.
- Information on how to initiate the Investigation or Resolution-Based Agreement process.

Initial Intake & Assessment

The Initial Assessment process seeks to gather information about the nature and circumstances of the report to determine whether this policy applies to the report and, if so, which resolution process may be appropriate, as well as which section of the grievance procedures apply based on the conduct and the status of the parties. The Title IX Coordinator may also determine that the provision of supportive measures is the appropriate response under the policy. The initial assessment is not a finding of fact or responsibility. If the individual bringing forward the complaint is not the actual complainant, the Title IX Coordinator will limit communication to general information on policies and processes.

Should the complainant wish to initiate a resolution process, the Title IX Coordinator will determine whether this policy applies and, if so, the appropriate process under this policy. The Title IX Coordinator will communicate this determination to the complainant.

If the information provided does not suggest a potential violation of this policy, the Title IX Coordinator will provide the complainant written notice if the matter is being referred for handling under a different policy, and/or to another appropriate office for handling. More information about dismissals is provided below.

Requests for Confidentiality or No Further Action

When a complainant requests that Bennington College not use their name as part of any resolution process, or that Bennington College not take any further action, Bennington College will generally try to honor those requests. However, there are certain instances in which Bennington College has a broader obligation to the community and may need to act

against the wishes of the complainant. In such circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator will notify the complainant in writing of the need to take action. The factors the Title IX Coordinator will consider when determining whether to act against the wishes of a complainant include:

1. The complainant's request not to proceed with initiation of a complaint.
2. The complainant's reasonable safety concerns regarding initiation of a complaint.
3. The risk that additional acts of Prohibited Conduct would occur if a complaint were not initiated.
4. The severity of the alleged Prohibited Conduct, including whether the discrimination, if established, would require the removal of a respondent from campus or imposition of another disciplinary sanction to end the discrimination and prevent its recurrence.
5. The age and relationship of the parties, including whether the respondent is an employee of Bennington College.
6. The scope of the alleged discrimination, including information suggesting a pattern, ongoing sex discrimination, or sex discrimination alleged to have impacted multiple individuals.
7. The availability of evidence to assist a Decisionmaker in determining whether sex discrimination occurred; and
8. Whether Bennington College could end the alleged sex discrimination and prevent its recurrence without initiating its grievance procedures under this policy.
9. Whether the conduct as alleged presents an imminent and serious threat to the health or safety of the complainant or other persons, or that the conduct as alleged prevents Bennington College from ensuring equal access on the basis of sex to its education program or activity.

Emergency Removal

For sex discrimination and sex-based harassment, Bennington College retains the authority to remove a respondent from Bennington College's program or activity on an emergency basis, where Bennington College (1) undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, (2) determines that an imminent and serious threat to the health or safety of a complainant or any student, employee, or other individual arising from the allegations of sex discrimination justifies a removal, and (3) Bennington College provides the respondent with notice of and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

The respondent may challenge the decision immediately following the removal (roughly two business days, unless circumstances justify an extension), by notifying the Title IX Coordinator or designee in writing. Bennington College will designate an impartial individual, not otherwise involved in the case, to consider the challenge to the removal and determine if the emergency

removal was reasonable. For all other Prohibited Conduct, Bennington College may defer to its interim suspension policies for students and administrative leave for employees.

Administrative Leave

Bennington College retains the authority to place an employee respondent on administrative leave during a pending complaint process under this policy, with or without pay as appropriate. Administrative leave implemented as an emergency removal is subject to the procedural provisions above, including the right to challenge the decision to implement that measure.

Dismissal of a Complaint

Before dismissing a complaint, Bennington College will make reasonable efforts to clarify the allegations with the complainant.

Bennington College may dismiss a complaint if:

- Bennington College is unable to identify the respondent after taking reasonable steps to do so.
- The respondent is not participating in Bennington College's education program or activity and is not employed by Bennington College.
- The complainant voluntarily withdraws their complaint in writing and the Title IX Coordinator declines to initiate a complaint.

The complainant voluntarily withdraws some but not all allegations in a complaint in writing, and Bennington College determines that the conduct that remains alleged in the complaint would not constitute Prohibited Conduct under this policy; or

- Bennington College determines the conduct alleged in the complaint, even if proven, would not constitute Prohibited Conduct under this policy.

Upon dismissal, Bennington College will promptly notify the complainant in writing of the basis for the dismissal. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then Bennington College will notify the parties simultaneously in writing. If a dismissal of one or more allegations changes the appropriate decision-making process under these procedures, the Title IX Coordinator will include that information in the notification.

Bennington College will notify the complainant that a dismissal may be appealed on the basis outlined in the Appeals section. If dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then Bennington College will also notify the respondent that the dismissal may be

appealed on the same basis. If a dismissal is appealed, Bennington College will follow the procedures outlined in the Appeals section of these procedures.

When a complaint is dismissed, Bennington College will, at a minimum:

- Offer supportive measures to the complainant as appropriate.
- If the respondent has been notified of the allegations, offer supportive measures to the respondent as appropriate; and,
- Take other prompt and effective steps, as appropriate, through the Title IX Coordinator to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within Bennington College's education program or activity.

A complainant who decides to withdraw a complaint or any portion of it may later request to reinstate it or refile it.

Referrals for Other Misconduct

Bennington College has the discretion to refer complaints of misconduct not covered by this policy for handling under any other applicable Bennington College policy or code. As part of any such referral for further handling, Bennington College may use evidence already gathered through any process covered by this policy.

Should there be a conflict between the provision of this policy and other Bennington College policies, procedures, rules, regulations, or terms or conditions of employment, the provisions of this policy will govern unless specifically stated otherwise.

This policy and these procedures are separate from Bennington College's student disciplinary processes, by which Bennington College may bring a discipline charge against a student for violating Bennington College policy according to the provisions found in Bennington College [code of conduct](#).

Consolidation of Cases

Bennington College may consolidate complaints under this policy as appropriate: for example, if there are multiple complaints where the allegations of Prohibited Conduct arise out of the same facts or circumstances, or there are multiple complaints with overlapping parties.

Bennington College also reserves the right to use this policy to adjudicate other allegations and conduct charges as defined by policies outside of the scope of this policy in instances when the conduct is associated with an alleged issue of Prohibited Conduct under this policy. The Title IX Coordinator will address these consolidated complaints in collaboration and coordination with other appropriate offices, such as Student Services and Human Resources.

Allegations of a violation of a separate policy are not required to be handled using the procedural requirements set forth in this policy.

Student Withdrawal or Employee Resignation while Matters are Pending

If a student or employee respondent permanently withdraws or resigns from Bennington College with unresolved allegations pending, Bennington College will consider whether and how to proceed with the resolution process. The Bennington College will continue to address and remedy any systemic issues or concerns that may have contributed to the alleged violation(s) and any ongoing effects of the alleged Prohibited Conduct.

A student or employee party permanently withdraws or resigns while the process is pending may not return to Bennington College without first resolving any pending matters. Such exclusion applies to all Bennington College campuses and programs. Admissions will be notified that the student cannot be readmitted, and they may also be barred from Bennington College property or events. If a student respondent withdraws or takes a leave for a specified period of time (e.g., one semester or term), the resolution process may continue remotely, and that student will not be permitted to return to the College unless and until the matter is fully resolved.

An employee respondent who resigns with unresolved allegations pending is not eligible for rehire with Bennington College and the records retained by the Title IX Coordinator will reflect that status.

D. OPTIONS FOR RESOLUTION

There are multiple ways to resolve a complaint or report of Prohibited Conduct. Whenever possible, Bennington College will utilize the resolution method chosen by the complainant. During the resolution of a complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will determine whether to implement reasonable supportive measures designed to assist all parties (complainants and respondents) and community members in maintaining access to and participation in Bennington College programs, services and activities during the resolution of the complaint.

This section includes information on Support-Based Resolution, Agreement-Based Resolution, and Investigation or Investigation and Hearing procedures.

Support- Based Resolution

A support-based resolution is an option for a complainant who does not wish Bennington College to take any further steps to address their concern, and when the Title IX Coordinator determines that another form of resolution, or further action, is not required. Some types of support that may be appropriate include adjustments or changes to class schedules; moving from one residence hall room to another; adjusted deadlines for projects or assignments;

adjustments to work schedules or arrangements; escorts to and around campus; or counseling.

A support-based resolution does not preclude later use of another form of resolution, for example if new information becomes available to Bennington College and the Title IX Coordinator determines there is need for additional steps to be taken, or the complainant later decides to pursue a Resolution Agreement or Investigation, or Investigation and Hearing.

Agreement-Based Resolution

Agreement-Based Resolution is an alternative to the investigation and decision-making procedures where the Parties each voluntarily agree to resolve the complaint in a way that does not include an investigation and does not include any finding of responsibility. Agreement-Based Resolution is a voluntary, structured interaction between or among affected parties that balances support and accountability. If the Bennington College offers Agreement-Based Resolution to the parties, and they voluntarily consent to engage in that process, the Title IX Coordinator will still take other prompt and effective steps as needed to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the College's education program or activity.

Any party may design the proposed agreement between the parties. The Title IX Coordinator must approve of the use of the Agreement-Based Resolution process and approve the final agreement between the parties. Agreement-Based Resolution may be initiated at any time prior to the release of the final determination. Because Agreement-Based Resolution does not involve an investigation, there is not any determination made as to whether a respondent violated this policy.

The Title IX Coordinator has the discretion to determine that Agreement-Based Resolution is not an appropriate way to address the reported conduct, and that the matter must instead be resolved through the Investigation or Investigation and Hearing process. For example, the Title IX Coordinator may decline to allow Agreement-Based Resolution if they determine that the alleged conduct would present a future risk of harm to others.

Initiating the Agreement-Based Resolution Process

Prior to the initiation of Agreement-Based Resolution, the Title IX Coordinator will provide the Parties written notice that includes:

- The specific allegation and the specific conduct that is alleged to have occurred.
- The requirements of the Agreement-Based Resolution process.
- Any consequences resulting from participating in the Agreement-Based Resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared, and whether Bennington College could disclose such information for use in a future Bennington

College grievance process, including an investigation and resolution process arising from the same or different allegations, as may be appropriate.

- Notice that an agreement resulting from the Agreement-Based Resolution process is binding only on the parties and is not subject to appeal.
- Notice that once the Agreement is finalized and signed by the Parties, they cannot initiate or continue an investigation procedure arising from the same allegations.
- A statement indicating that the decision to participate in the Agreement-Based Resolution process does not presume that the conduct at issue has occurred.
- A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for violating this policy unless the respondent admits to violations of this policy.
- An explanation that all parties may be accompanied by an advisor of their choice, who may be a parent, colleague, friend, or attorney.
- A statement that any party has the right to withdraw from the Agreement-Based Resolution process and initiate or resume grievance procedures at any time before agreeing to a resolution.
- The date and time of the initial meeting with staff or the Title IX Coordinator, with a minimum of 3 business days notice.
- Information regarding supportive measures, which are available equally to the parties; and
- The potential terms that may be requested or offered in an Agreement-Based Resolution agreement.

Facilitating an Agreement

If all Parties are willing to explore Agreement-Based Resolution, the Title IX Coordinator will then meet separately with each party to discuss the Agreement-Based Resolution process and facilitate an agreement. If an agreement cannot be reached, either because the Parties do not agree, determine they no longer wish to participate in the Agreement-Based Resolution process, or the Title IX Coordinator does not believe that the terms of the agreement or continuing the Agreement-Based Resolution process is appropriate, the Title IX Coordinator may decide that the reported conduct will instead be addressed through the Investigation or Investigation and Hearing process. The Title IX Coordinator will inform the parties of such a decision, in writing.

Agreement-Based Resolution processes are managed by facilitators (who are trained and appointed by the College) who do not have a conflict of interest or bias in favor of or against complainants or respondents generally or regarding the specific parties in the matter. The Title IX Coordinator may serve as the facilitator, subject to these restrictions. The investigator or Decisionmaker for the matter may not facilitate an Agreement-Based Resolution in that same matter.

Any party may craft or create the terms of their agreement and will be asked for their suggestions or ideas. Examples of agreements may include but are not limited to:

- an agreement that the Parties will not communicate or otherwise engage with one another.
- an agreement that the Parties will not contact one another.
- completion of a training or educational project by the respondent.
- completion of a community service project by the respondent.
- an agreement to engage in a restorative justice process or facilitated dialogue; and/or
- discipline agreed upon by all parties.

In order to facilitate Agreement-Based Resolution, information shared by any party in the context of the Agreement-Based Resolution process will not be used in any related resolution process of the same complaint under this policy. No evidence concerning the allegations obtained within the Agreement-Based Resolution process will be disseminated to any outside person except as required by law, provided that any party to the Agreement-Based Resolution process may generally discuss the allegations under investigation with a parent, advisor, or other source of emotional support, or with an advocacy organization. An admission of responsibility made during an Agreement-Based Resolution process, however, may not be incorporated into any subsequent investigation and adjudication proceeding.

Finalizing the Resolution Agreement

Once the final terms of the Resolution Agreement have been agreed upon by all parties, in writing, and approved by the Title IX Coordinator, the matter will be considered closed, and no further action will be taken. Once signed, no appeal is permitted. The Agreement-Based Resolution process is generally expected to be completed within thirty (30) days and may be extended by the Title IX Coordinator as appropriate. All parties will be notified, in writing, of any extension and the reason for the extension.

Records of an Agreement-Based Resolution process can be shared with other offices as appropriate.

Any violations of the terms of the Resolution Agreement may result in disciplinary action.

Investigation & Decision-making Resolution

This policy includes the following two types of investigation and decision-making procedures:

- All prohibited conduct matters except for sex-based harassment involving a student as a party; and
- Sex-based harassment involving a student as a party.

The following information applies to both types of investigation and decision-making procedures.

Acceptance of Responsibility

If a respondent accepts responsibility for all or part of the Prohibited Conduct alleged, the Coordinator or designated sanctioning officer will issue an appropriate sanction or responsive action as to those violation(s) and continue processing any remaining allegations of Prohibited Conduct, if any.

Assignment of the Investigator and/or Decisionmaker

Bennington College will assign a trained investigator and/or Decisionmaker to conduct an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation and hearing, if applicable, in a reasonably prompt timeframe. Bennington College reserves the right to utilize internal or external investigators, Decisionmakers, or hearing officers.

All parties have the option to participate in the investigation and/or hearing, and each have the same rights during the resolution process including the right to an advisor, to submit relevant witness names and evidence, and to review the evidence gathered by the investigator prior to the investigator providing the final report to the Decision Maker. In cases where there is a hearing, all parties have the same rights at the hearing, including the right to review any evidence that will be considered by the Decisionmaker prior to the hearing.

The investigator will establish deadlines for submission of names of relevant witnesses and submission of evidence and communicate those deadlines to the parties in writing.

Conflict of Interest or Bias

After a Notice of Investigation is issued to all parties, any party may object to the participation of the Title IX Coordinator or designated investigator on the grounds of a demonstrated bias or actual conflict of interest. All parties will have three (3) business days from the date of the Notice of Investigation to object to the selection of the investigator or the Title IX Coordinator. Objections to the Title IX Coordinator are to be made, in writing, to the Vice President of Finance and Administration. Objections to the appointment of the investigator are to be made in writing, to the Title IX Coordinator. All objections will be considered, and changes made as appropriate. If the objection is substantiated as to either the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator, that individual will be replaced. Any change will be communicated in writing.

Timeline

In those cases that do not include a hearing, Bennington College strives to complete the investigation process within ninety (90) days from the date of the Notice of Investigation. In those cases that include a hearing, Bennington College strives to complete the investigation process within sixty (60) days from the date of the Notice of Investigation and complete the hearing within sixty (60) days of the Notice of Hearing.

The timeline for any part of the resolution process may be extended for good cause by the Title IX Coordinator. All parties shall be notified, in writing, of any extension to the timeline that is granted, the reason for the extension, and the newly anticipated date of conclusion of the investigation and/or hearing. Good cause reasons for extension may include ensuring availability of witnesses and other participants and ensuring participants have sufficient time to review materials.

Bennington College shall not unreasonably deny a student party's request for an extension of a deadline related to a complaint during periods of examinations or school closures, such as winter break, holidays, summer recess, and work terms.

The investigator and/or Title IX Coordinator shall provide the Parties with periodic status updates, in writing.

Burden and Standard of Review

Bennington College has the burden of conducting an investigation that gathers sufficient evidence to determine whether Prohibited Conduct occurred. This burden does not rest with any party, and any party may decide to limit their participation in part or all of the process, or to decline to participate. This does not shift the burden of proof away from Bennington College and does not indicate responsibility. The standard of proof used in any investigation and decision-making process is the preponderance of the evidence standard, which means more likely than not.

Written Notice of Meetings

Bennington College will provide to a party or witness whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all meetings or proceedings with sufficient time to prepare to participate.

Evidence Gathering

Interviews

The investigator will interview all parties and relevant witnesses and gather relevant documentary evidence provided by the parties and any identified witnesses. Interviews may

be conducted in person, or via video conference. When a party meets with an investigator, the investigator will ask questions related to the allegations in the complaint and a party is given the opportunity to speak to the allegations and related events. Parties may identify fact witnesses and provide evidence that is relevant to the allegations and not otherwise impermissible. This will include inculpatory evidence (that tends to show it more likely that someone committed a violation) and exculpatory evidence (that tends to show it less likely that someone committed a violation). The investigator ultimately determines whom to interview to determine the facts relevant to the complaint.

Impermissible Evidence

The following types of evidence, and questions seeking that evidence, are impermissible. This means this information will not be accessed or considered, except by Bennington College to determine whether one of the exceptions listed below applies. This information will not be disclosed or otherwise used, regardless of relevance:

- Evidence that is protected under a privilege recognized by Federal or State law, unless the person to whom the privilege or confidentiality is owed has voluntarily waived the privilege or confidentiality.
- Evidence provided to an employee designated by Bennington College as exempt from internal reporting under this policy unless the person who made the disclosure or otherwise provided evidence to that employee has voluntarily consented to re-disclosure.
- A party's or witness's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional in connection with the provision of treatment to the party or witness, unless Bennington College obtains that party's or witness's voluntary, written consent for use in its grievance procedures; and
- Evidence that relates to the complainant's sexual interests or prior sexual conduct, unless evidence about the complainant's prior sexual conduct is offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged conduct or is evidence about specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual conduct with the respondent that is offered to prove consent to alleged sex-based harassment. The fact of prior consensual sexual conduct between the parties does not by itself demonstrate or imply the complainant's consent to other sexual activity or preclude a determination that Prohibited Conduct occurred.

Investigation & Decision Making Procedures for All Prohibited Conduct Except Sex-Based Harassment Involving a Student Party

This procedure is for all matters of Prohibited Conduct being investigated and determined under this policy except for sex-based harassment involving a student as a party.

Bennington College will assign a trained investigator and/or trained hearing officer to conduct an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation and hearing in a reasonably prompt timeframe. Bennington College reserves the right to utilize internal or external investigators and hearing officers.

All parties have the option to participate in the investigation and/or hearing, and each have the same rights during the resolution process including the right to an advisor, to submit relevant witness names and evidence, and to review the evidence gathered by the investigator prior to the investigator's making any findings. In the event of a hearing, all parties have the same rights, including the right to review any evidence that will be considered by the Hearing Officer prior to the hearing.

Notice of Investigation

Prior to the start of an investigation, the Parties will be provided a written Notice of Investigation communicating the initiation of an investigation. Should additional allegations be brought forward, or additional information regarding the location or date of the incident(s) be identified, a revised written Notice of Investigation will be provided to all parties.

The Notice shall include, at a minimum:

- Bennington College's resolution procedures, including the applicable determination procedure, and any alternative resolution process, with a link to the full procedures.
- The specific allegations, including the identity of the parties, and dates and location if known.
- Sufficient information available at the time to allow the parties to respond to the allegations, including the identities of the parties involved in the incident(s), a description of the facts alleged to constitute Prohibited Conduct, the type of Prohibited Conduct, and the date(s) and location(s) of the alleged incident(s).
- A statement that Retaliation is prohibited.
- Contact information for the assigned investigator and Decisionmaker, as well as the process for raising a challenge to the appointed investigator, Decisionmaker, or Title IX Coordinator, and the deadline for doing so.
- Expected length of the major stages of the resolution process, as well as any applicable deadlines.
- Whether the Investigator, or another individual, shall serve as the Decisionmaker.
- A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for Prohibited Conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the investigation and decision-making procedures. Prior to such a determination, the parties will have an opportunity to present relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence to a trained, impartial Decisionmaker.

- Although not required and completely optional, the parties may have an advisor of their choice.
- The parties are entitled to an equal opportunity to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence, and to provide a response.
- A statement that Bennington College prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during grievance procedures, with a link to the relevant policy(ies).
- The date and time of the initial interview with the investigator, with a minimum of five (5) days' notice.

Individual Interviews

The investigator will hold individual interviews with parties and witnesses to ask relevant and not otherwise impermissible questions and follow-up questions, including questions exploring credibility. Only the investigator and the party or witness may attend each individual interview. A party's advisor may attend these meetings, subject to the rules described above in this policy. Additional attendees may be permitted at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator in connection with an approved disability-related accommodation. All persons present at any time during any part of the investigation or resolution process are expected to maintain the privacy of the proceedings and not discuss or otherwise share any information learned as part of those proceedings, and they may be subject to Bennington College discipline for failure to do so.

Bennington College may also adopt and apply other reasonable rules regarding decorum, provided they apply equally to the parties.

The individual interviews may be conducted with all participants physically present in the same geographic location, or, at Bennington College's discretion, with all participants joining virtually through a video conferencing option.

Bennington College will share expectations of decorum to be observed at all times in any meeting or proceeding under this policy. These expectations are applied equally to all parties and advisors. Bennington College has the discretion to remove, with or without prior warning, from any meeting or proceeding an involved party, witness, or advisor who does not comply with these expectations and any other applicable Bennington College rules.

Evidence Review

At the conclusion of all fact-gathering, the investigator will provide each party and their advisor, if any, the opportunity to review all relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence gathered.

The purpose of the inspection and review process is to allow each party the equal opportunity to meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation, to submit any additional relevant evidence, and the names of any additional witnesses with relevant information. This is the final opportunity to offer evidence, or names of witnesses. Given the sensitive nature of the information provided, Bennington College will facilitate this review in a secure manner. None of the parties nor their advisors may copy, remove, photograph, print, image, videotape, record, or in any manner otherwise duplicate or remove the information provided. Any student or employee who fails to abide by this may be subject to discipline. Any advisor who fails to abide by this may be subject to discipline and/or may be excluded from further participation in the process.

The parties will have a minimum of five (5) business days to inspect and review the evidence and submit a written response in writing to the investigator. Bennington College will provide access to copies of the parties' written responses to the investigator to all parties and their advisors, if any. The Title IX Coordinator shall have the discretion to extend the evidence review period based on the volume and nature of the evidence. At the conclusion of the evidence review, when deemed appropriate by the investigator, the investigator shall then conduct any additional fact-gathering as may be necessary. If new, relevant evidence is gathered during this second fact-gathering period, the new evidence will be made available for review by the parties and their advisors. The parties shall have 5 business days to provide a response to the newly gathered evidence. No new evidence will be accepted as part of any response, except that the investigator shall have the discretion to accept relevant evidence that was not previously available or known to exist, and that was not previously discoverable with the exercise of reasonable diligence.

The investigator will consider the parties' written responses before finalizing the investigation report.

The parties may each submit a written impact statement prior to the conclusion of the resolution process. The impact statement is not evidence and will be reviewed only after a determination of responsibility is reached.

Investigation Report

The investigator, who may also serve as the Decisionmaker, shall evaluate the relevant and not impermissible evidence and make a factual determination regarding each allegation, and also determine whether a violation of the policy occurred. The investigator may choose to place less or no weight upon statements by a party or witness who refused to respond to questions deemed relevant and not impermissible or declined to participate. The investigator will not draw an

inference about whether sex-based harassment occurred based solely on a party's or witness's refusal to respond to questions.

The investigator shall prepare a report which shall include:

- A description of the allegations of Prohibited Conduct.
- Information about the policies and procedures used to evaluate the allegations.
- A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, and methods used to gather other evidence.
- An evaluation of the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence and the rationale for that evaluation.
- Findings of fact for each allegation, with rationale.
- Conclusions regarding which section of this policy or other Bennington College policy, if any, the respondent has or has not violated, with rationale.

This report shall be provided to the Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Assistant. In the event that the Decisionmaker has determined that a violation of College policy has occurred, the Title IX Coordinator shall then provide the report to the appropriate Sanctioning Officer to determine the sanction, and the Title IX Coordinator shall then determine the appropriate remedy(ies) for the complainant and any impacted parties.

The Title IX Coordinator shall then provide the parties and their advisors, if any, with a written Notice of Outcome and a copy of the investigation report. The Notice of Outcome shall include:

- A statement of, and rationale for, any disciplinary sanctions Bennington College imposed on the respondent.
- A statement as to whether remedies will be provided to the Complainant.
- For the complainant, a description of any remedies that apply to the complainant.
- Bennington College's procedures and the permitted reasons for the parties to appeal, including identifying the Appeals Officer.
- How to challenge participation by the Appeals Officer for bias or conflict of interest, which the Title IX Coordinator will resolve in their sole discretion.

The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that Bennington College provides the parties with the written determination of the result of any appeal, or, if no party appeals, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

Investigation & Decision-making Procedures in Cases of Sex-Based Harassment Involving a Student

The following describes the investigation and decision-making procedures for matters of sex-based harassment in which a student is either a complainant or respondent, regardless of the status of the other party.

Notice of Investigation

Prior to the start of an investigation, the Parties will be provided a written Notice of Investigation communicating the initiation of an investigation. Should additional allegations be brought forward, or additional information regarding location or date of the incident(s) be identified, a revised written Notice of Investigation shall be provided to all parties.

The Notice shall include, at a minimum:

1. Bennington College's investigation procedures, including the applicable determination procedure that will be used in this investigation and resolution, and a link to the relevant policies.
2. Information about the process, with a link to the full procedures.
3. Sufficient information available at the time to allow the parties to respond to the allegations, including the identities of the parties involved in the incident(s), a description of the facts alleged to constitute Prohibited Conduct, the type of Prohibited Conduct, and the date(s) and location(s) of the alleged incident(s).
4. A statement that retaliation is prohibited.
5. Whether the investigator, or another individual, will serve as the Decisionmaker.
6. Expected length of the major stages of the resolution process, as well as any applicable deadlines.
7. The Notice will inform the parties that the investigator will establish and communicate, in writing, all investigation deadlines, including the final deadlines for submitting names of witnesses, evidence, and relevant questions to ask a party or witness. These deadlines may be extended by the Title IX Coordinator for good cause, and any changes will be provided, in writing, to the parties, along with the rationale for the revised deadline(s).
8. The process for raising a challenge to the appointed resolution officer or Title IX Coordinator, and the deadline for doing so.
9. A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for Prohibited Conduct until a determination is made at the conclusion of the resolution process. Prior to such a determination, the parties will have an opportunity to present relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence to a trained, impartial Decisionmaker.
10. A statement that the parties may have an advisor of their choice who may be a friend, parent, therapist, colleague, or attorney.
11. The parties are entitled to an equal opportunity to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence or an investigation report that accurately summarizes this evidence. ; and

12. That Bennington College policy prohibits students and employees from knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance procedures.
13. The date and time of the initial interview with the Investigator, with a minimum of five (5) days' notice.

Individual Interviews

The investigator will hold individual interviews with parties and witnesses to ask relevant and not otherwise impermissible questions and follow-up questions, including questions exploring credibility, and to request of the parties the names of relevant witnesses and relevant evidence. Parties' advisors may attend interviews, subject to the rules described in this policy. Witness interviews will only be attended by the witness and the investigator. Additional attendees may be permitted at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator in connection with an approved disability-related accommodation. All persons present at any time during any part of the investigation or resolution process are expected to maintain the privacy of the proceedings and not discuss or otherwise share any information learned as part of the grievance process and may be subject to Bennington College discipline for failure to do so.

The investigator will then gather from parties, witnesses, and other sources, all relevant evidence.

Bennington College will share expectations of decorum to be observed at all times in any meeting or proceeding under this policy. These expectations are applied equally to all parties and advisors. Bennington College has the discretion to remove from any meeting or proceeding an involved party, witness, or advisor who does not comply with these expectations and any other applicable Bennington College rules.

The individual interviews may be conducted with all participants physically present in the same geographic location, or, at Bennington College's discretion, with all participants joining virtually through a video conferencing option. The investigator will determine, in their sole discretion, whether parties and witnesses are likely to provide relevant information about the allegations and has the sole discretion to determine which parties and witnesses to call for an interview. The investigator may conduct follow-up interviews as they deem appropriate.

Investigator Determination of Relevance

The investigator will determine whether parties and witnesses are likely to provide relevant information about the allegations and has the sole discretion to determine which parties and witnesses to call to individual follow-up meetings.

The investigator will review all evidence gathered through the investigation and determine what evidence is relevant and what evidence is impermissible regardless of relevance. Character evidence that is not relevant will not be considered.

Evidence Review

At the conclusion of all fact-gathering, the investigator will provide each party and their advisor the opportunity to review all relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence gathered. In the event that an audio or audiovisual recording is shared, the recording will only be made available at an in-person and monitored meeting on campus, and will not otherwise be transmitted for review, so as to maintain the privacy of those participating in the process.

The purpose of the inspection and review process is to allow each party the equal opportunity to meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation, to submit any additional relevant evidence, and to share the names of any additional witnesses with relevant information. This is the final opportunity to offer evidence or names of witnesses. Evidence not provided during the investigation process will not be considered by the Decisionmaker. Given the sensitive nature of the information provided, Bennington College will facilitate this review in a secure manner. None of the parties nor their advisors may copy, remove, photograph, print, image, videotape, record, or in any manner otherwise duplicate or remove the information provided. Any student or employee who fails to abide by this may be subject to discipline. Any advisor who fails to abide by this may be subject to discipline and/or may be excluded from further participation in the process.

The parties will have a minimum of five (5) business days to inspect and review the evidence and submit a written response in writing to the investigator. The Title IX Coordinator shall have the discretion to extend the evidence review period based on the volume and nature of the evidence.

When deemed appropriate by the investigator, the investigator shall then conduct any additional fact-gathering as may be necessary. If new, relevant evidence was submitted as part of evidence review, or is gathered during this second fact-gathering period, the new relevant evidence will be made available for review by the parties and their advisors. The parties shall have 5 days to provide a response to the newly gathered evidence. No new evidence will be accepted as part of any response, except that the investigator shall have the discretion to accept relevant evidence that was not previously available or known to exist, and that was not previously discoverable with the exercise of reasonable diligence.

The investigator will consider the parties' written responses before finalizing the investigation report.

Investigation Report

The investigator will prepare a written report summarizing all of the relevant evidence gathered and all steps taken during the investigation process. The investigator will also include as an attachment all relevant evidence gathered during the investigation, as well as all interview notes or transcripts.

Conclusion of Investigation, Notice of Hearing

Once the investigation report is final, the report together with all attachments shall be provided to each party and to their advisor, if any, in a secure manner (e.g., by providing digital copies of the materials through a protected, "read-only" web portal). Each party shall have ten (10) business days to provide a response. The response, if any, shall be provided to the Hearing Officer.

Following conclusion of the investigation, each party shall be provided with a Notice of Hearing, which shall include information regarding the date of the hearing, the identity of the Hearing Officer, the process to be used at the hearing, deadlines for submission of evidence, names of witnesses, or questions to be reviewed by the Hearing Officer to ensure they are relevant to the allegations. The hearing shall be scheduled no less than ten (10) days from the date of the Notice of Hearing.

Within three (3) days of receipt of the Notice of Hearing, either party may object to the Hearing Officer on the basis of a demonstrated bias or actual conflict of interest. Any objection is to be in writing and sent to the Title IX Coordinator. Should the Title IX Coordinator determine that there is an actual bias or conflict of interest, the Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Assistant shall appoint another Hearing Officer.

Hearing Procedures

The purpose of a hearing is for a Hearing Officer to determine whether the conduct occurred as alleged, and if so, whether that conduct violates this policy. Bennington College expects that all individuals who participate in the hearing process do so truthfully and that all who have a responsibility for carrying out one or more aspects of the hearing process do so fairly and without prejudice or bias. Hearings will be conducted via videoconferencing. The Title IX Coordinator may determine that the hearing will continue in the absence of any party or any witness.

Bennington College will appoint a Hearing Officer, who may be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator or Investigator, who will determine whether a violation of Bennington College policy has occurred. The Hearing Officer shall have the authority to determine the relevance

of evidence submitted, and of questions asked, to limit the time allotted to any phase of the hearing, and/or to limit the time allotted to the full hearing. The Hearing Officer shall not draw an inference about the determination regarding responsibility based solely on a party's absence from the hearing or refusal to answer questions posed.

Each hearing shall be recorded by Bennington College and this recording will be considered the only official recording of the hearing. No other individual is permitted to record while the hearing is taking place. The recording is the property of Bennington College but shall be available for listening until the conclusion of the appeals process to complainant, respondent, their respective advisors, Hearing Officer, and the Appeal Officer by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.

Prior to the Hearing

The parties and the Hearing Officer all have the right to call witnesses. Witnesses participating in the hearing must have information relevant to the allegations. Parties who wish to call witnesses must submit the name of the witness at least five (5) business days in advance of the hearing.

Only witnesses who participated in the investigation will be permitted to participate in the hearing unless the witness was otherwise unknown or not known to have relevant information during the course of the investigation. If the witness did not participate in the investigation, the party must also provide the reason the witness was not interviewed by the investigator, and what information the witness has that is relevant to the allegations. The Hearing Officer will then determine whether the witness has relevant information and if there is sufficient justification for permitting the witness to participate. The Hearing Officer may instead send the case back to the investigator to interview the newly proffered witness prior to the hearing taking place.

A list of witnesses approved by the Hearing Officer will be provided to the parties at least three (3) days prior to the hearing.

Three (3) days prior to the hearing, each party shall submit to the Hearing Officer a preliminary list of questions they wish to pose to the other party, or to a witness. If the Hearing Officer determines that any questions are not relevant or seek otherwise impermissible evidence, the Hearing Officer shall exclude those questions and explain the reason for the exclusion of those questions at the hearing. Questions that are unclear or harassing of the party or witness being questioned will not be permitted. The Hearing Officer must give a party an opportunity to clarify or revise any question that the Hearing Officer has determined is unclear or harassing and, if the party sufficiently clarifies or revises a question, and the question is relevant, the question will be asked by the Hearing Officer.

Advisor

Each party is entitled to be accompanied by one advisor of choice at the hearing. The role of the advisor is to assist the party with understanding and navigating the proceedings. The advisor may not advocate for, respond for, or otherwise speak on behalf of, a party during the hearing. In the event that a party does not appear for the Hearing, the advisor for that party may not participate in the hearing or submit questions to be asked on behalf of the party.

Hearing Participation Guidelines

The Hearing Officer shall have the authority to maintain order and decorum at the hearing, including responding to disruptive or harassing conduct, and when necessary to adjourn the hearing or exclude the disruptive person. In the event the Hearing Officer removes an advisor, the Hearing Officer will have the discretion to appoint another advisor for the remainder of the hearing. The Hearing Officer also has the authority to determine whether any questions are irrelevant, abusive, intimidating, or disrespectful, and will not permit such questions. The Hearing Officer will not draw an inference about the determination regarding responsibility based solely on a party's absence from the live hearing.

Statements, Questioning and Presentation of Evidence

During the hearing, each party will be permitted to provide an introductory statement. Following introductory statements, the Hearing Officer will call parties and witnesses for questioning. The order of questioning shall be determined by the Hearing Officer. The Hearing Officer will pose questions to the parties and witnesses including the questions the Hearing Officer approved to be asked that were submitted by each party prior to the hearing. Each party will then be provided an opportunity to submit follow-up written questions to the Hearing Officer for the Hearing Officer to pose to the other party or witnesses. If the Hearing Officer determines that any questions are not relevant to the allegations, or seek otherwise impermissible evidence, the Hearing Officer shall exclude the question and explain the reason for the exclusion of the question at the hearing and offer an opportunity to the party to reframe or resubmit the question. Questions that are unclear or harassing of the party or witness being questioned will not be permitted.

Only the Hearing Officer is permitted to ask questions of parties and witnesses. Neither party may directly question the other party or witness. Advisors are not permitted to directly or indirectly question the other party or witness.

Following the questioning of parties and witnesses, each party will be permitted to provide a closing statement. An advisor is not permitted to provide a closing statement on behalf of the party they are advising.

Hearing Officer's Report

Following the hearing, the Hearing Officer shall prepare a determination report. All findings shall be made by a preponderance of the evidence, meaning more likely than not. To the

extent credibility determinations need to be made, such determinations shall not be based on a person's status as complainant, respondent, or witness.

The determination report will include:

- A description of the sex-based harassment and other allegations if applicable.
- A reference to the policies and procedures used to evaluate the allegations.
- Description of all procedural steps taken to date.
- The Hearing Officer's evaluation of the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence along with the finding of facts.
- Determinations for each allegation, with the rationale.
- Sanction determination (if applicable)
- Whether remedies will be provided.
- The procedures for an appeal.

The Hearing Officer's report shall be provided to the Title IX Coordinator. If the Hearing Officer determines that there is no finding of responsibility, the Title IX Coordinator shall communicate the findings to each party and their advisor a written Notice of Outcome along with a copy of the Hearing Officer's report, to the parties, together with procedures for appeal.

If there is a finding of responsibility, the Title IX Coordinator will contact the sanctioning officer who will determine the sanction and notify the Title IX Coordinator of the sanctioning determination. The Title IX Coordinator will then provide each party and their advisor a written Notice of Outcome regarding the Hearing Officer's decision, including the Hearing Officer's report. The Title IX Coordinator will also provide written communication to the complainant regarding any appropriate remedies.

APPEALS

Determinations may be appealed in writing by either party. Appeals will be sent to the Title IX Coordinator, who will then send the appeal to the Appeals Officer assigned to conduct a written review of the appeal(s) and to make a final determination. Appeals must be in writing and filed within ten (10) days following the issuance of the outcome letter.

When an appeal is filed, the other party shall be notified and provided with a copy of the filed appeal within one (1) day and have five (5) days to respond to the appeal in writing. Any party's decision not to submit a reply to an appeal is not evidence that the non-appealing party agreed with the appeal.

Within three (3) days of an Appeal Officer being assigned, either party may provide written objection to the Appeal Officer on the basis of an actual bias or conflict of interest. Any objection is to be sent to the Title IX Coordinator. Should the Title IX Coordinator determine

that there is an actual bias or conflict of interest, the Title IX Coordinator will appoint another Appeal Officer.

Appeals may be filed only on the following three grounds:

1. Procedural Error: A procedural error occurred and would change the outcome. A description of the error and its impact on the outcome of the case must be included in the written appeal; or,
2. New Evidence: New evidence or information has arisen that was not available or known to the party during the investigation or hearing, which would change the outcome. Information that was known to the party during the resolution process but which they chose not to present is not considered new information. The new evidence, an explanation as to why the evidence was not previously available or known, and an explanation of its potential impact on the investigation findings must be included in the written appeal; or
3. Actual Conflict of Interest or Demonstrated Bias: The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or others with a role in the process had an actual conflict of interest or demonstrated bias for or against complainants or respondents generally, or the individual complainant or respondent, which would change the outcome. Any evidence supporting the alleged conflict of interest or demonstrated bias must be included in the written appeal.

The Appeal Officer will make a determination regarding the appeal and communicate that decision, along with a rationale for the decision to the Title IX Coordinator who will communicate the Appeal Officer's decision to the parties. The decision of the Appeals Officer is final.

Failure to Complete Sanctions/Comply with Responsive Actions

All responding parties are expected to comply with conduct sanctions/responsive actions/corrective actions within the timeframe specified by Bennington College. Responding parties needing an extension to comply with their sanctions must submit a written request to the Title IX Coordinator stating the reasons for needing additional time.

Failure to follow through on conduct sanctions/responsive actions/corrective actions by the date specified, whether by refusal, neglect or any other reason, may result in additional sanctions/responsive actions/corrective actions, such as suspension, expulsion, or termination. Students who fail to comply will be referred to the conduct office in accordance with Bennington College's Student Handbook.

E. RECORD RETENTION

In implementing this policy, records of all reports and resolutions will be kept by the Coordinator in accordance with the applicable Bennington College records retention schedule. All records will be afforded the confidentiality protections required by law, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act governing confidentiality of student information.

F. ADDITIONAL ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) investigates reports of unlawful harassment and discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in employment.

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) investigates complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment of students and employees in education programs or activities.

For more information, contact the nearest office of the EEOC or OCR.

US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights

- Boston Office
Office for Civil Rights
US Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921

Telephone: 617-289-0111
FAX: 617-289-0150; TDD: 800-877-8339
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

<https://www.eeoc.gov/contact-eeoc>

- JFK Federal Building
15 New Sudbury Street, Room 475
Boston, MA 02203-0506
[1-800-669-4000](tel:1-800-669-4000)

G. POLICY REVIEW & REVISION

These policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated regularly by the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will submit modifications to this policy in a manner

consistent with institutional policy upon determining those changes to law, regulation or best practices require policy, or procedural alterations not reflected in this policy and procedure. Procedures in effect at the time of its implementation will apply. The policy definitions in effect at the time of the conduct will apply even if the policy is changed subsequently, unless the party's consent to be bound by the current policy.

This policy may be revised at any time without notice. All revisions supersede prior policy and are effective immediately upon posting to the Bennington College website.

H. KEY DEFINITIONS

Advisor: Each party has the right to choose and consult with an advisor of their choice at their own expense. The advisor may be any person, including a friend, family member, therapist, union representative, or an attorney. Bennington College will not limit their choice of advisor. Parties in this process may be accompanied by an advisor of choice to any meeting or proceeding to which they are required or are eligible to attend.

Except where explicitly stated by this policy, advisors shall not participate directly in the process. Bennington College will provide the parties with equal access to advisors; any restrictions on advisor participation will be applied equally.

The advisor may not represent, advocate, or speak on behalf of a complainant or respondent. An advisor may not disrupt or impede any resolution proceeding.

Amnesty: a provision whereby a member of the College community who makes a report or assists another in making a report to the Bennington College or who participates in the resolution of a complaint under this policy will not be subject to Bennington College's policy concerning alcohol or drug use for actions that may have occurred at or near the time of the Prohibited Conduct defined within this policy, unless the alcohol or drug-related misconduct threatens the health or safety of another.

Coercion/Force: Consent cannot be procured by the use of physical force, compulsion, threats, intimidating behavior, or coercion. Sexual activity accompanied by coercion or force is not consensual.

- Coercion refers to unreasonable pressure for sexual activity. When someone makes it clear that they do not want to engage in sexual activity or do not want to go beyond a certain point of sexual interaction, continued pressure beyond that point can be considered coercive. The use of coercion can involve the use of pressure, manipulation, substances, or force. Ignoring objections of another person is a form of coercion.

- Force refers to the use of physical violence or imposing on someone physically to engage in sexual contact or intercourse. Force can also include threats, intimidation (implied threats), or coercion used to overcome resistance.

Complaint: A complaint means an oral or written request to Title IX Coordinator that objectively can be understood as a request for the Bennington College to investigate and make a determination about alleged sex discrimination under this policy. A complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail (email), by using the contact information listed on the Title IX/Equal Opportunity website (LINK), or as described in this policy. Individuals who would like more information about filing a complaint are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator for additional information.

Complainant: Any individual who has reported being or is alleged to be impacted by Prohibited Conduct as defined by this policy, and who was participating or attempting to participate in a Bennington College program or activity at the time of the alleged misconduct.

Confidential Resources: any individual identified by the College as a Confidential Resource who receives information about conduct prohibited under this policy in their confidential capacity and who are privileged under state law and who will not report prohibited conduct disclosed to them without written consent. Designation as a Confidential Resource under this policy only exempts such individuals from disclosure to the Title IX Coordinator. It does not affect other mandatory reporting obligations under state child abuse reporting laws, the Clery Act as a campus security authority, or other laws that require reporting to campus or local law enforcement.

Consent is knowing, voluntary and mutual decision among all participants to engage in sexual activity, expressed in words or actions. For consent to be valid, there must be a clear expression in words or actions that the other individual consented to that specific sexual conduct with that particular person or people. The State of Vermont defines consent as: the affirmative, unambiguous, and voluntary agreement to engage in a sexual act, which can be revoked at any time.

Individuals may experience the same interaction in different ways. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each party to determine that the other has consented before engaging in the activity. If consent is not clearly provided prior to engaging in the activity, consent may be ratified by word or action at some point during the interaction or thereafter, but clear communication from the outset is strongly encouraged.

Consent to some sexual contact (such as kissing or fondling) cannot be presumed to be consent for other sexual activity (such as intercourse). Past consent does not imply future consent. A current or previous dating relationship is not sufficient to constitute consent.

The existence of consent is based on the totality of the circumstances, evaluated from the perspective of a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident occurred. Silence or the absence of resistance alone is not consent. In Vermont, anyone under the age of 16 years cannot consent to sexual activity except in limited circumstances dictated by law.

Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity through reasonable and clear communications through words or actions. When consent is withdrawn, sexual activity must stop.

Consent cannot be given if any of the following are present: Incapacitation, Force, or Coercion.

Days: any reference to days refers to business days when Bennington College is in normal operation.

Decisionmaker: Trained professional designated by Bennington College to decide responsibility, sanction, or appeals. A Decisionmaker may be one person, or a panel of multiple people as determined by the Bennington College. When there is no hearing, the investigator may be appointed as the Decisionmaker.

Disclosure or Report: A disclosure or report may be made by anyone, whether they learned about conduct potentially constituting sex discrimination under this policy, or whether they personally experienced such conduct. A person making a disclosure or report may or may not be seeking to initiate an investigation.

Education Program or Activity: Bennington College's "education program or activity" includes all campus operations, including off-campus settings that are operated or overseen by the Bennington College, including, for example, field trips, online classes, and athletic programs; conduct subject to the Bennington College's disciplinary authority that occurs off-campus; conduct that takes place via Bennington College-sponsored electronic devices, computer and internet networks and digital platforms operated by, or used in the operations of, the Bennington College. Conduct that occurs outside of the education program or activity may contribute to a hostile environment within the program or activity.

Finding: a written conclusion by a preponderance of the evidence, issued by an Investigator, that the conduct did or did not occur as alleged.

Incapacitation occurs when someone cannot make rational, reasonable decisions because they lack the capacity to give knowing and informed consent (e.g., to understand the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of their sexual interaction). Incapacitation is determined through consideration of all relevant indicators of a person’s state and is not synonymous with intoxication, impairment, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This policy also covers a person whose incapacity results from temporary or permanent physical or mental health condition, involuntary physical restraint, and/or the consumption of incapacitating drugs, or who are sleeping.

Under this policy, the Bennington College will consider whether a respondent knew or should have known the complainant to be incapacitated, based on an objective, reasonable person standard that assumes the reasonable person is both sober and exercising sound judgment. The fact that the respondent was unaware of the complainant’s incapacity due to the respondent’s own drug or alcohol use shall not be considered as an excuse.

No-Contact Directive: A No Contact Directive is a document issued by a Bennington College administrator that is designed to limit or prohibit contact or communications between the parties. A No-Contact Directive may be mutual or unilateral, with the exception that a No-Contact Directive issued as either a sanction or remedy shall be unilateral, directing that the respondent does not contact the complainant.

Notice: All notices under this policy are written and sent to the student or employee’s assigned Bennington College email address or delivered via Certified Mail to the local or permanent address(es) of the parties as indicated in official Bennington College records, or personally delivered to the intended recipient.

Party/parties: Referring to complainant(s), respondent(s), or both/all complainant(s) and respondent(s).

Remedies: Remedies means measures provided, as appropriate, to a complainant or any other person the Bennington College identifies as having had their equal access to the Bennington College’s education program or activity limited or denied by sex discrimination or other prohibited conduct covered by this policy. These measures are provided to restore or preserve that person’s access to the education program or activity after a Bennington College determines that sex discrimination occurred. Only the complainant will be informed of any remedies pertaining to them. Some examples are academic support and/or opportunity to retake a class or resubmit work or time extensions on course or degree completion, or non-academic support such as counseling, or changes to work assignments or locations. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for implementation of remedies.

Respondent: an individual, or group of individuals such as a student organization, who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute Prohibited Conduct under this policy; or retaliation for engaging in a protected activity. If a complaint alleges that a College policy or practice discriminates on the basis of sex, it may be investigated under this policy without identifying an individual respondent.

Sanctions: One or more of the sanctions or disciplinary steps listed here may be imposed on a respondent who is found responsible for a violation of Bennington College's policies. Sanctions or disciplinary steps not listed here may be imposed in consultation with the Title IX Coordinator.

The form of sanction or discipline used will depend on the nature of the offense, as well as any prior disciplinary history. Such discipline or sanction will be imposed pursuant to and in accordance with any and all applicable Bennington College rules, policies, and procedures.

Factors considered when determining a sanction/responsive action may include:

- The nature, severity of, and circumstances surrounding the violation.
- An individual's disciplinary history.
- Previous grievances or allegations involving similar conduct.
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to bring an end to the sex discrimination or retaliation.
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to prevent the future recurrence of sex discrimination or retaliation.
- The need to remedy the effects of the sex discrimination or retaliation on the victim and the campus community.

Student sanctions imposed are implemented when the decision is final (after an appeal, or, if there was no appeal, after the appeals period expires).

Faculty found responsible for violating this policy may be referred to the Dean of Faculty for any other applicable processes.

Possible sanctions and disciplinary steps for student respondents include, but are not limited to the following:

- Training
- Education
- Housing Ban
- Facility Ban
- Fines
- Community Service
- Disciplinary Probation

- Suspension
- Expulsion

Possible sanctions and disciplinary steps for staff and faculty respondents include, but are not limited to:

- Training
- Education
- Suspension
- Probation
- Separation

Possible sanctions and disciplinary steps for respondents found responsible for engaging in prohibited behavior defined by the Violence Against Women Act include, but are not limited to:

- Probation
- Suspension
- Separation/Expulsion

Student: Any person who has (or will have) attained student status by way of:

1. Admission, housing or other service that requires student status.
2. Registration for one or more credit hours.
3. Enrollment in any non-credit, certificate or other program offered by the university.

Supportive Measures: Individualized measures offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, without unreasonably burdening a complainant or respondent, not for punitive or disciplinary reasons, and without fee or charge to the complainant or respondent to:

- Restore or preserve that party's access to the Bennington College's education program or activity, including measures that are designed to protect the safety of the parties or the Bennington College's educational environment; or
- Provide support during Bennington College's grievance procedures or during an alternative resolution process.

Supportive measures may include but are not limited to: counseling; extensions of deadlines and other course-related adjustments; campus escort services; increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus; restrictions on contact applied to one or more parties; leaves of absence; changes in class, work, housing, or extracurricular or any other activity, regardless of whether there is or is not a comparable alternative; no-contact directives (which may be mutual or unilateral at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator); and training and education programs related to sex-based harassment. Supportive measures are non-disciplinary and non-punitive.

Supportive Measures will also be offered to respondents when they are notified of the allegations.

Any Supportive Measures put in place will be kept confidential, except when doing so impairs the ability of the institution to provide the Supportive Measures.

The College will offer and coordinate supportive measures as appropriate for the parties as applicable to restore or preserve their access to the College's program or activity or provide support during the College's alternative resolution process or grievance procedures. Prohibited Conduct under this policy have the right to request supportive measures from the College regardless of whether they desire to make a complaint or seek alternative resolution.

A party may challenge the College's decision to provide, deny, modify, or terminate supportive measures when such measures are applicable to them. An impartial employee will be designated to consider modification or reversal of Bennington College's decision to provide, deny, modify, or terminate supportive measures. When the individual providing Supportive Measures is a Deputy Title IX Coordinator or other individual identified by the Title IX Coordinator to provide Supportive Measures, the Title IX Coordinator will be designated to consider the challenge regarding supportive measures. The impartial employee will typically respond to the challenge within five (5) days.

The Title IX Coordinator has the discretion to implement or modify supportive measures. Violation of the parameters of supportive measures may violate existing codes or handbooks.

I. RESOURCES

Privileged & Confidential Resources for Students and Employees

- Ali Tartaglia, Assistant Dean and Director of Wellness, 802-440-4755 or 802-440-4444
- Steven Young, Case Manager, 802-440-4321

Employees Exempt from Reporting, for Students and Employees

- All clinical staff in Counseling and Psychological Services (x4451; off campus 802-440-4451)
- All clinical staff in Health Services (x4426; off campus 802-440-4426)
- [Employment Assistance Program](#) (Employees)