

# Anti-Harassment

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The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association (PSLA) is committed to providing a safe and harassment-free environment for all its members and guests and has a zero-tolerance policy regarding harassment, intimidation and discrimination made on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender presentation, sexual orientation, age, body size, disability, mental condition, class, citizenship, veteran status, marital/domestic partnership status, appearance, religion, citizenship and pregnancy status or any other marginalized identity.

PSLA will treat all reported incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of harassment. All complaints of harassment will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence. Our culture is based on mutual respect and collaboration. No one will be victimized for making such a complaint.

## I. Scope

PSLA seeks to provide an environment in which diverse participants may learn, network, and enjoy the company of colleagues in an environment of mutual human respect. We recognize a shared responsibility to create and hold that environment for the benefit of all. Speakers are asked to frame discussions as openly and inclusively as possible and to be aware of how language or images may be perceived by others. Members who become uncomfortable are encouraged to remove themselves from the situation immediately.

Harassment is prohibited whether it takes place face-to-face or in a virtual environment, including but not limited to association meetings, social events, business trips, professional learning sessions or conference events. Members, contractors, exhibitors, event attendees, press, staff, volunteers, security, authors, speakers, presenters and others interacting with our association are covered by this present policy.

## II. Definition of Discrimination

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of groups of people or individuals.

## III. Definition of Harassment

PSLA defines harassment as one or more offensive or antagonistic comments or behaviors in any form, including but not limited to physical, verbal, or non-verbal incidents and actions, and regardless of whether the occurrence is in real or virtual space.

### Examples

#### Physical conduct

- Unwelcome physical contact or attention
- Physical violence

#### Verbal conduct

- Comments, condescending remarks or insults about a person's appearance, dress, sexuality or gender in a derogatory or objectifying manner or a manner that makes them uncomfortable, humiliated or intimidated
- Overt statements which would disparage the dignity of any individual or group
- Sexual advances
- Repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy
- Sending sexually explicit messages (by phone or by email)
- Sustained disruption of programs (panels, signings, meet-ups and other events)
- Bullying or coercion, in particular, attempting to cause someone else to accept a certain belief or position.

#### Non-verbal conduct

- Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material or gestures
- Stalking
- Non-consensual photography or recording

Harassment does **not** include respectful disagreement or reasonable and respectful critique made in good faith. PSLA continues to welcome and appreciate presentation of controversial ideas, free speech, and creative artistic

expression. PSLA encourages members to hold one another accountable to the Statement of Appropriate Conduct and to take the perspectives of others seriously when a disagreement arises.

**IV. Statement of Appropriate Conduct – Code of Conduct**

All participants at Pennsylvania School Librarians Association events and activities are required to comply with the PSLA Anti-Harassment Policy and any additional relevant PSLA policies.

PSLA members and event participants are committed to providing a friendly, safe, supportive and harassment-free environment for all PSLA members, regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender presentation, sexual orientation, age, body size, disability, mental condition, class, citizenship, veteran status, marital/domestic partnership status, appearance, religion, citizenship and pregnancy status or any other marginalized identity.

Sexual language and imagery are not appropriate for any member venue, including events, talks, workshops, social events and social media.

PSLA expects its members and event participants to communicate professionally and constructively, whether in person or virtually, handling dissent or disagreement with courtesy, dignity and an open mind, being respectful when providing feedback, and being open to alternate points of view.

When sharing information about the organization via public communication channels, PSLA expects its members and event participants to share responsibility and clearly distinguish individual opinion from fact.

**V. Reporting Procedures**

Any person who believes there has been a violation of the PSLA Anti-Harassment Policy can report the offense by providing all relevant details, including the nature of the complaint, date and list of witnesses.

- Immediately contact an officer, Board member, designated PSLA member or security and provide the nature of the complaint, date and list of witnesses.
- Contact PSLA through the Board email – [pslboard@psla.org](mailto:pslboard@psla.org) – which can be used to report an incident. This communication vehicle allows for anonymous reporting. Emails will be monitored, including during PSLA events.

PSLA will fully investigate all complaints, including those made anonymously, and take whatever action is necessary and appropriate to prevent a recurrence. Please note however, that PSLA will not be able to follow up on an anonymous report with the complainant directly, as PSLA will not have contact information for the anonymous complainant. PSLA will make every attempt to respond to a named complainant in a timely fashion.

**VI. Sanctions**

PSLA takes all allegations of harassment seriously. Every report will be investigated by a panel. The results of the investigation and the recommendations of the panel will be reported to the officers of PSLA, who will determine, in conjunction with the panel or, when appropriate, in consultation with an independent arbiter, the appropriate sanction. Sanctions may include any of the following:

- warning the party involved that the particular behavior is inappropriate and must be ceased;
- immediate removal from the event, without refund;
- denial of access to PSLA spaces and venues on a temporary or permanent basis;
- withholding of a contracted honorarium;
- prohibition from future speaking engagements;
- prohibition from future leadership appointments;
- termination of current PSLA membership, without refund;
- prohibition from future PSLA membership;
- legal action

The extent of the sanctions will depend on the gravity of the founded incidents of harassment. Suitable deterrent sanctions will be applied to ensure that incidents of harassment are not treated as trivial.

**VII. Confidentiality**

The PSLA will make every reasonable effort to conduct all investigations into allegations of harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of all parties involved. Notwithstanding the above, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and is not absolute, and those with a legitimate business reason to know and be informed of the allegations will be so informed. Parties to the complaint should treat the matter under investigation with discretion and respect the reputation of all parties involved.

**VIII. Non-Retaliation**

The PSLA Anti-Harassment Policy prohibits retaliation against a member of the PSLA community for reporting harassment, intimidation or discrimination, or for participating in an investigation relating to any complaint made. The sanctions for retaliation are the same sanctions available to address any other violation of the PSLA Anti-Harassment Policy.

**IX. Implementation of the Policy**

PSLA will ensure that this policy is disseminated through the PSLA website and other relevant communication methods.

Adopted, Board of Directors, July 29, 2018  
Amended, June 15, 2020