



## **ANTI-HARASSMENT/NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

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### **Purpose and Scope of Policy**

In order to ensure that everyone attending our events or participating in our social media is able to engage fully, The Skeptical Society of St. Louis (SSSL) is committed to providing a safe and hospitable environment both on-and-offline. Accordingly, SSSL prohibits intimidating, threatening, discriminatory, or harassing conduct during our events, on our Facebook page, in our Meetup group, and on any other social media platform to which we may subscribe in the future.

### **Policy Application**

For events, this policy applies to speakers, group leaders, volunteers, and attendees. For social media and other online outlets, this policy applies to all participants and members of these outlets.

### **Unacceptable Behavior**

In general, unacceptable behavior includes any abusive conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with another person's ability to enjoy and participate in formal and informal events and our social media platforms.

Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Yelling at or threatening speakers or attendees, or any significantly disruptive conduct. By way of example, repeated interruption of a speaker by an attendee is prohibited.
- Harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or any other protected group status, as provided by local, state, or federal law.
- Sexual harassment, unwelcome sexual attention, unwelcome physical contact, or stalking. Polite expressions of interest in another person are not prohibited.
- Threatening, abusive, sexually explicit, or other unwelcome behavior either in-person or in online social forums, including "jokes" or "references" which may offend.

Critical examination of beliefs, including critical commentary on another person's views, does not, by itself, constitute hostile conduct or harassment. One of the underlying rationales of this policy is to promote the free exchange of ideas, not to inhibit it.

## **Consequences of Hostile or Harassing Conduct**

SSSL has a zero-tolerance policy for hostile and harassing conduct. If a person engages in hostile or harassing conduct, appropriate remedial action will be taken, which may include, but is not limited to,

- Expulsion from events.
- Threats of hostile or harassing conduct that are made prior to an event may result in exclusion from the event.
- Blocking from online social media outlets.

The exact remedy for hostile or harassing conduct will depend on an evaluation of all relevant circumstances, such as the severity of the conduct and prior violations by the person engaging in prohibited conduct.

When there is a reasonable basis to believe the conduct is illegal, appropriate law enforcement authorities will be notified.

## **Reporting Hostile or Harassing Conduct; Investigations**

Persons who are the targets of, or witnesses to, hostile or harassing conduct should contact current SSSL Board members.

- For an event, any attending SSSL Board Member, including the Board President, should be notified of the offending act. Reports of hostile or harassing conduct will be promptly addressed. On some occasions, where group leaders are witnesses to the prohibited conduct, immediate remedial action may be taken. Where a report of hostile or harassing conduct is made to group leaders after the conduct has occurred, reasonable measures will be taken to establish the facts. This will typically include discussion with witnesses, if any, and the person accused of engaging in the prohibited conduct. Inquiries into hostile or harassing conduct will be conducted with sensitivity and privacy.
- For any social media or other online forum – Please notify any SSSL Board Member, including the Board President, by sending a private message or tagging the person in the comments section. SSSL Board Members cannot be online at all times and in all forums so we ask for help from our membership to ensure harassment does not go unnoticed. If a Board Member witnesses the harassing behavior, immediate action should be taken by noting the offense, deleting the offending post, and blocking the offending individual from further interaction. If a report is made after the conduct has occurred, reasonable measures will be taken to establish the facts. This will typically include discussion with any witnesses, and the person accused of engaging in the prohibited conduct. Please keep in mind that online harassment may be difficult to investigate given the ability to remove posts, hack accounts, and tamper with online evidence, especially given the limited tools and resources available to SSSL Board Members. Inquiries into hostile or harassing conduct will be conducted with sensitivity and privacy.