

## **The Atheist Community of Austin Anti-Harassment Policy**

The Atheist Community of Austin places great value on freedom of speech and the ability to challenge ideas. We believe that vigorous debate about beliefs and the actions that result from them is valuable. No idea is sacred. No idea is inherently worthy of respect, and not all ideas are equally meritorious.

People, on the other hand, are worthy of respect. Attacking individuals, and not their ideas, is not appropriate and may cross the line into harassment. We believe that vigorous, even contentious, debates about the merits of ideas, especially religious beliefs, can take place without denigrating the people involved in the debate. Membership within the ACA is contingent upon accepting and abiding by this harassment policy.

### **Definition of Harassment**

Harassment includes offensive comments (especially regarding: race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, age), sexual or hateful images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, unwelcome sexual attention, as well as any other behaviors that create a risk to personal health and safety, with final decision in the hands of the ACA Board of Directors.

### **ACA Anti-Harassment Policy**

The Atheist Community of Austin is committed in all areas to promoting an environment that is free from harassment. Harassment for any reason will not be tolerated. All members, especially officers of the organization, are expected and required to abide by this policy at all times, towards members and non-members alike. Any infractions by members should be reported to the ACA Board of Directors.

Participants at any ACA-sponsored event asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately. Members, their guests, visitors to the group, speakers, vendors, booth operators, exhibitors, or others associated with an ACA event are all equally subject to the anti-harassment policy. If a participant engages in harassing behavior, the event organizers and/or any ACA Board Member may take any action they deem appropriate, including warning the offender or expulsion from the group or event {with no refund}. Any actions taken must be reported to the ACA Board of Directors, following the Reporting Procedure outlined below.

Nothing in the policy is intended to prohibit, restrict, or police consensual activity or discussion between adults. The key element in avoiding a charge of harassment is to obtain an affirmative “yes” to behavior toward others, and not just an absence of “no.” It is always appropriate to **ask** if your behavior toward someone is welcome.

### **Reporting Procedure**

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact either an event organizer or a member of the ACA Board of Directors immediately. You may also make a report by email or by phone.

If an incident occurs at an official ACA event, event staff and/or the ACA Board of Directors will be happy to help participants contact hotel/venue security or local law enforcement, provide escorts, or otherwise assist those experiencing harassment to feel safe for the duration of the conference. We value your attendance.

We expect event participants to follow these rules at all ACA events and event-related social events. We expect members to follow these rules at all times. A copy of this harassment policy must be either posted or available at all ACA-sponsored events. A copy of this harassment policy must be made available for all joining prospective ACA members.