

Philosophy of Discipline

The purpose of discipline within the Bethel community is to help students become people who are whole, holy, and wise, grow in relationship to God and other community members, and live in harmony with community expectations.

We seek to be redemptive and restorative in ways that are helpful to the individual and beneficial to the community. Discipline within our community provides an opportunity for a student to examine his or her choices within the context of grace as we work to facilitate restoration of the individual to God and to the community. At the same time, we desire that discipline would increase the student's commitment to live in alignment with Bethel's Covenant for Life Together and increase students' knowledge of their value to the Bethel community and their responsibility to it.

We are a community in which all persons are respected as being created in the image of God. We also recognize that each of us has sin in our lives and that none of us are in a place to judge another (Matthew 7:1; James 4:12). Our spiritual tradition and our mutual respect for one another compel us to encourage and support one another with a spirit of grace and forgiveness (Galatians 6:1) as we strive to uphold the standards of our community. It is assumed that members will choose to be self-disciplined and hold themselves personally accountable for the community standards. If that fails, the biblical principles of Matthew 18:15-17 guide our interactions and confrontation with each other.

Community members, especially friends, should assume responsibility to confront those whose behavioral choices fall outside of community expectations. If, after expressing concern and offering help, the problem seems to be of a serious and/or continuing nature, referral should be made to a Student Life staff member. Our desire is that students, faculty, and other members of the Bethel community would approach the Student Life staff with confidence that they will be received gracefully, listened and attended to, and encouraged toward growth and restoration (Hebrews 12:14-15). Student Life professionals are committed to responding in a timely, respectful, and confidential manner.

As the office within the College of Arts & Sciences charged with the responsibility of discipline and care of undergraduate students, the Office of Student Life seeks to implement a disciplinary process that meets the student as an individual, examines motivations, repentance, teachability, and the student's needs, and then determines an appropriate outcome for any offense based on the preponderance of evidence. Careful attention is given not only to the act in question but to the student in terms of predicament, response, intent, as well as influence upon the rest of the student body. A plan for accountability may be implemented with the goal of restoring the student into harmony with community expectations. While we need to address the student's behavior, our desire is to speak to the condition of the "heart" in ways that foster real change (Hebrews 12:11).

Student Life also has a responsibility and commitment to the health and safety of the community in addition to maintaining a commitment to the particular student. Because an individual's behavior affects others, disciplinary consequences will be decided based on what is best for the community as well as the individual.

At Bethel, it is not acceptable for community members to participate in events at which others from the Bethel community are violating the Covenant for Life Together or Bethel's behavioral expectations. It is expected that students who know of or find themselves in these situations will speak to the offending student(s) about their behavior and remove themselves from the situation. They should encourage any student(s) in violation of Bethel's Covenant to seek accountability, counsel, and help under our non-disciplinary policy (see above). Student Life staff are available to discuss any situation of concern with students and other members of the community and may be contacted at any time. If concern for a fellow student continues, the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 (discussed above) should be followed.

Related Policies and Resources:

- [Disciplinary Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Non-Disciplinary Policy and Procedures](#)

Policy Contact:

- Office of Student Life
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 - 651-638-6300