



# Town of Shutesbury

## TOWN POLICY TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT A SAFE AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY

Approved by Shutesbury Select Board July 1, 2025

*Whereas*, the Town of Shutesbury unanimously passed an *Honoring Our Differences in a Safe Community* resolution at Town Meeting in 2017;

*Whereas*, the Town recognizes that we are a town, state and nation of people with both differences and similarities that should be recognized, celebrated and protected;

*Whereas*, the Town recognizes that the freedom to speak, read, write, learn, report, gather, celebrate, protest, worship, and identify as we choose is foundational to our democracy and inscribed in the U.S. Bill of Rights and the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights;

*Whereas*, the Town recognizes that civic engagement and participation foster a stronger, more vibrant, and resilient community by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to express themselves and that municipal policies and processes are representative of the needs of the community;

*Whereas*, the Town recognizes the inherent value of all persons within our community whether employees, residents, or visitors, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ethnic affiliation, religion, immigration status, physical or mental abilities or characteristics, or any other identities, as defined by the individual;

*Whereas*, the Town recognizes that safety means both physical and emotional well-being, and that a safe community is one where people feel welcomed, respected, and valued;

*Whereas*, the Town seeks to codify its commitment to openness and safety in its operations by establishing a binding policy that builds upon the prior unanimously supported resolution; and

*Whereas*, the Massachusetts Constitution and implementing statutes recognize the Home Rule authority of municipalities and the inherent self-government authority possessed by the people of Shutesbury that allows the Town to adopt bylaws and policies to achieve the aforementioned values;

**Therefore, toward these ends, the Town of Shutesbury adopts the following binding policy:**

It is the policy of the Town of Shutesbury to actively adopt and implement policies, due process procedural safeguards, and other relevant guidelines, consistent with all existing laws and regulations, that are informed by the acknowledgement that there is inherent value of all persons within our community whether employees, residents, or visitors, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ethnic affiliation, religion, immigration status, physical or mental abilities or characteristics, political party affiliation, or any other identities, as defined by the individual. As such, all people should be treated with respect and dignity, without discrimination of any kind.

In an effort to be a welcoming community to all, the Town of Shutesbury will:

- support and encourage thoughtful dialogue and exchange of perspectives based on the acknowledgement that civic participation and freedom of expression, even when there is disagreement, are core democratic values;
- work to integrate the values of this policy for a welcoming community by establishing and maintaining policies, procedures, bylaws, and operational norms that ensure that individual differences are honored and protected, and that barriers to civic participation for all residents are avoided or eliminated to the greatest extent possible;
- be vigilant in the defense of the rights of all people, whether employees, residents or visitors, and to equally and fairly enforce the law and Town policies; and
- uphold adherence to democratic principles, Constitutional frameworks, and due process safeguards at every level of government.

## Office of the Select Board

This policy shall apply to all Town governmental entities, committees, boards and departments, including the elementary school, and public safety departments, and all individual representatives of the Town whether an employee or volunteer.

Since the Town is proud to be a welcoming community, honoring differences, this policy shall be made broadly available – distributed to all current and new employees and volunteers and posted prominently in places frequented by the public, including in Town Hall.