



Manhattanville College  
2900 Purchase St.  
Purchase, NY 10577

Dear Students and Colleagues of the Manhattanville Community,

In the wake of yet another mass shooting at an American high school, our sympathy, thoughts, and prayers go out to the victims of this massacre, to the parents of the slain students, and also to the survivors of this horrible event. They will need time and help to overcome this traumatic experience, even if they themselves escaped unharmed in terms of physical injuries. It is almost unfathomable to imagine what it means to somebody to have their best friend or their brother or sister killed virtually in front of their eyes: a smile or a particular kind of laughter gone from our universe, or a person with whom they shared their hopes and anxieties forever silenced.

Having gone through such a horrible experience myself nearly half a century ago, I can tell you that the psychological wounds inflicted by senseless gun violence are slow to heal and take an active grieving process to overcome. As a society, we continue to fail these children and their parents because we do not wish to tackle the difficult questions that need to be asked before a sustainable solution can be found. One way to begin this process is not to look away from the horror experienced by the survivors, not to file this away as yet another distant news item, but to use the quality that makes us human: empathy. We must first imagine *what it would be like* if this were to happen to us or somebody we love in order to muster the energy, intellectual rigor, and passion required to tackle the complexity of this problem in an unflinching manner. That kind of blunt, national conversation needs to happen and I trust that members of the Manhattanville Community, as always, will be leaders in this debate.

In the meantime, I want to assure all of you that your safety on the Manhattanville campus is on all of our minds. First and foremost, let me remind those of you who may feel distressed or anxious in the wake of this tragedy that we have counselors standing by to talk to you about these anxieties or feelings of vulnerability. These feelings are a normal reaction to such a horrible event, but they can be overwhelming to some of us, so it is often not a bad idea to seek professional advice on how to deal with them.

By way of prevention, the Manhattanville CARE team, a small circle of professionally trained staff, meets weekly to review and assess situations that are brought to their attention by members of the campus community. More information on the CARE Team can be found here: [CARE Team](#). The focus of this group is on students experiencing distress or engaging in harmful or disruptive behaviors who may pose a risk to themselves or others. They will develop support or intervention strategies as necessary and provide case coordination.

**To report concerning behavior, there are several options available:**

- Any community member can send information to the CARE team through the online Incident Report Form found here: [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?ManhattanvilleCollege&layout\\_id=0](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?ManhattanvilleCollege&layout_id=0)
- Faculty and staff with Starfish access can flag and note concerns through the Starfish portal found here: [Starfish login](#)

In addition, the College has an array of services, programs, and departments that work together to ensure all members of the Manhattanville community are provided with a safe and secure learning environment. Manhattanville offers a comprehensive [Safety and Emergency Preparedness website](#) and a [Safety & Security brochure](#), which outline our emergency preparedness on and around our campus. In the event of a major emergency on campus or in our immediate area, you should visit our [Emergency Notification Page](#) for up-to-the-minute information.

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As needed, we have in place the following offices available for our students:

- **Campus Safety — 24/7 — 914.323.SAFE (7233)**
- **Counseling Center — 914.323.5155**
- **Health Center — 914.323.5245**
- **Residence Life — 914.323.5217**
- **Dean of Students — 914.323.3134**

The College rehearses for emergencies in two ways. (1) Quarterly residence halls evacuation drills (i.e., fire alarm drills). These serve two purposes: to ensure that all safety equipment (audible alarms and strobe lighting) is working properly and to remind students of their responsibilities during an emergency. (2) The College's Emergency Command Center simulations or "tabletop" exercises, including, but not limited to, severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, lightning, and a full evacuation of the college. The college has yearly drills for an active shooter scenario with local and state agencies. There are eight public "blue light" emergency phones around campus, providing individuals with immediate access to Campus Safety Services during emergencies. In addition, there are 17 interior and exterior emergency call boxes with immediate access to Campus Safety.

One final note: Time and time again, as we hear about these tragedies, bullying of "outsider" students by others is reported as one of the contributing factors. While nobody can take away the terrible responsibility for the slaughter from the individuals who commit such heinous acts of gun violence, we must do everything we can to reduce the likelihood of a trigger effect that results from bullying behavior by other students. My administration will, therefore, take a zero-tolerance approach not only to hate crimes, sexual harassment and assault, and other forms of physical violence, but we will also actively investigate any reports of consistent bullying of individual students. Where such reports are clearly documented and substantiated, the individuals found guilty of bullying will be held responsible and be subject to penalties up to and including immediate dismissal from Manhattanville College.

Let me close by saying that, if those among us who are concerned about the increase in gun violence make our voices heard on both a local and a national level, then maybe there will come a time when events such as this recent one will be a thing in our distant past.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael E. Geisler".

Michael E. Geisler  
*President*