



Allen Parish Libraries

"Bringing the World to You"

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, RETALIATION POLICY, AND BULLYING POLICY

SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING REQUIREMENT

- Each employee by state law is to complete the ethics training each year between January 1st and December 31st.
- The training can be found at this web address: <https://nola.gov/sexual-harassment-training/employee/>
- Once the employee has completed the sexual harassment training, the certificate must be printed, and
 - A copy of the certificate must be turned in to the director.
 - The director files the certificate accordingly by year.
- Employees will sign an annual acknowledgment that they have read and understand the Ethics Policy of the Allen Parish Libraries.

HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, RETALIATION POLICY, AND BULLYING POLICY

Allen Parish Libraries (APL) is firmly committed to the idea of a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. All employees have the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal opportunity and prohibits discriminatory practices, harassment of all kinds, and retaliation. At APL, discrimination, harassment, and unlawful retaliation, whether verbal, physical, or environmental, are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

APL prohibits conduct and comments that are inappropriate in the workplace even if not directly addressed by state, federal, or local law. Employees, at all levels in APL, have the responsibility to support and contribute to a respectful work environment which includes avoiding any participation in unacceptable behavior, implied or explicit, that violates this policy. All employees should act in a way that

will be seen as respectful and responsible from the perspective of the people with whom they interact. Unlawful discrimination, harassment of any kind, or retaliation occurring in the workplace or in connection with work in violation of this policy will not be tolerated.

INDIVIDUALS COVERED BY THIS POLICY

This policy covers all employees, including full-time, part-time, hourly, temporary, salaried, contract employees, supervisors, directors, managers, board members, volunteer workers, and support staff.

APL will not tolerate, condone, or allow discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Neither will APL tolerate, condone, or allow discrimination, harassment, or retaliation by outside customers, vendors, independent contractors, or other non-employees who conduct business with or visit APL's libraries and facilities. APL encourages all employees to report all incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, regardless of who the offender may be or the offender's relationship to APL.

Workplace bullying is unacceptable and will not be permitted under any circumstances. Bullying may take many forms including persistent, malicious, unwelcome, hostile, severe, and pervasive mistreatment that harms, intimidates, offends, degrades, humiliates, or sabotages the performance of an employee, whether verbal, physical, written, or otherwise. Workplace bullying often involves an abuse or misuse of power.

The following discussions of what can constitute discrimination, sexual harassment, and unlawful harassment are simply guidelines. Be mindful that they are illustrative, not exhaustive examples.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination generally involves treating one employee or application differently from another in connection with terms or conditions of employment such as hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, and training because of that person's gender, color, race, age, national origin, pregnancy, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, military status, disability, handicap, religion, creed, sexual orientation, citizenship status, or another legally protected status. It could also involve a failure to make a reasonable accommodation in certain circumstances.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment includes unwelcome or unwanted advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to or rejection of this conduct by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting hiring, evaluation, retention, promotion, or other aspects of employment; or

- This conduct reasonably could be expected to and does interfere with an individual's work environment, or employment, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment
- The behavior persists despite objection by the person to whom the conduct is directed.

Examples of situations that may be sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual advances;
- Demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment or continued employment;
- Sexual pranks, repeated sexual teasing, jokes, or innuendo.
- Verbal conduct such as derogatory comments, slurs, insults, or verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Repeatedly asking a person to socialize during off-duty hours when the person has said no or indicated that they are not interested
- Giving gifts or leaving sexually suggestive objects
- Comments that the recipient indicates are unwelcome, such as sexual invitations, sexual jokes, propositions, and comments or gestures which are suggestive and/or obscene.
- Unwanted graphic, verbal commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies;
- Touching, grabbing, pinching, assault, battery, coerced sexual acts, blocking of normal movements, unwanted flirtations, advances, leering, or whistling;
- Talking about one's sexual activity in front of others
- Visual conduct such as sexually explicit, derogatory, or offensively printed or visual material such as posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings, emails, notes, gestures, or other displays in the workplace of sexually suggestive or offensive objects or pictures;
- Unwanted conduct or comments consistently targeted at only one gender, even if the content is not sexual; or
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report sexual harassment

OTHER UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT

Includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual that is based on gender, color, race, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, handicap, marital status, veteran status, pregnancy, religion, creed, sexual orientation, citizenship status or another legally protected status, and either affects terms or conditions of employment, unreasonably interferes with work performance or creates an intimidation, hostile, or offensive work environment.

As an illustration, some examples of conduct that may be regarded as unlawful harassment based on a hostile or offensive work environment include:

- Using derogatory or inflammatory language including jokes that make fun of or belittle an individual because of inherent personal characteristics such as ethnicity, sex, gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or disability;
- Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, disparaging remarks, or intimidation acts based on any of the protected categories listed above;
- Telling or forwarding jokes directed to someone's protected status, such as racial or ethnic jokes regardless of whether "everyone tells them back and forth";
- Posting, forwarding, showing, or displaying in any manner cartoons that make fun of any group, religious belief, sex, or individual because of their protected status;
- Forwarding offensive emails, printing them out, displaying them in any manner, or
- Utilizing APA communication tools and resources such as the internet, email, or voicemail to retrieve, view, display, or pass along messages or material that could be considered inappropriate, offensive, and/or unprofessional. Written or electronic communications or other graphic materials that are sexual or present a person's characteristics, such as race or ethnicity, in a hostile or offensive manner are inappropriate and are prohibited under this policy.
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment.

AREA COVERED

This behavior is unacceptable in the workplace itself and other work-related settings, such as business trips, outside work appearances, and business-related social events. In evaluating behavior, the standard to be applied is that of a reasonable person. This policy is designed to protect all employees from discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in any way associated with the workplace or work environment.

DISSEMINATING THE POLICY

APL will announce and disseminate this policy to all employees and post it in each APL location. All supervisors and managers are responsible for knowing the substance of the policy and for implementing it.

All employees must also be aware of the contents and substance of the policy. The Library Director is available to answer all questions about the policy or its implementation.

REPORTING PROCEDURE/PREVENTION

All employees are strongly encouraged, and managers and supervisors are required, to immediately report any discrimination, harassment, or retaliation to the Library Director.

Employees, including managers and supervisors, should not assume APL is aware of concerns or issues brought to your attention by another employee. To allow APL to prevent and correct harassing, discriminatory, or retaliatory conduct, it is essential that all employees use this reporting procedure and that APL receives information on every instance of such conduct promptly. Accordingly, every employee should understand that under no circumstances should anyone believe that they cannot or should not report any discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.

Do not allow an inappropriate or unlawful situation to continue by not reporting it, regardless of who is creating the situation. You should not ignore inappropriate behavior or assume someone else will deal with it. No person in APL is exempt from this policy.

If the person(s) to whom you would normally report discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, or who is charged with investigation discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, is the accused person(s), report such behavior to the Library Director or a member of management for APL.

Employees should also be aware of the time limits imposed by local, state, and national government agencies for filing complaints of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; those time limits are posted on the official notices which are displayed on bulletin boards at each library location.

INVESTIGATING THE COMPLAINT OR REPORT

APL will promptly, thoroughly, and objectively investigate complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation and will take prompt remedial and/or disciplinary action as appropriate under the circumstances. All employees are expected to cooperate with APL's efforts to investigate such complaints. All complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation will be kept confidential except to the extent that disclosure may be necessary for an investigation or remedial action.

Confidentiality

Except as set forth below, APL will not reveal the names of participants, the facts of an investigation, or any written information regarding an investigation to anyone not involved in the investigation, and will reveal to those involved only the information necessary to investigate thoroughly and effectively and to take the necessary and appropriate disciplinary/remedial action.

APL may not be able to keep written or other records of the complaint and investigation confidential if someone sues APL or its employees, or solicits action by a government agency, based on alleged discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Records may be discoverable to the extent that no applicable privilege protects them.

The Investigation

Each situation warrants the specific investigation needed.

APL's Library Director will complete the investigation of a complaint and will determine the appropriate actions and communicate them through the best-suited person to the complainant and accused person(s) as quickly as possible.

Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. APL may discipline an employee for any inappropriate conduct discovered in investigating complaints or reports made under this policy, regardless of whether the conduct amounts to a violation of law or even a violation of this policy. The action also will be taken against all other violators as deemed necessary or as regulated by law.

ACTION

APL will impose upon any individual found to have engaged in misconduct constituting discrimination, harassment, or retaliation appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Actions may include education or training, referral to counseling, withholding of a promotion, reassignment, change in status, suspension without pay, financial penalties, or termination.

MAINTAINING A WRITTEN RECORD OF THE COMPLAINT OR REPORT

APL will keep a written record of each complaint or report and how it was investigated and handled. APL will maintain written records on a confidential basis.

NO RETALIATION

APL will not tolerate and prohibits retaliation against anyone who makes a complaint of or reports discrimination, harassment, or retaliation or participates in the investigation of such a complaint or report.

Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy. Report it immediately. Any person found to have retaliated against another for reporting discrimination, harassment, or retaliation is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

FORMAL LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

The procedures above apply to internal complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Different procedures may apply if a formal administrative charge or a civil lawsuit is filed by a government agency. If you receive such a charge, claim, complaint, or suit, deliver it to the Library Director immediately.

APL strictly prohibits retaliation against any person who files a formal charge or complaint of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Any such retaliation will subject that person to discipline up to and including termination.

CONCLUSION

APL has developed this policy to ensure that all employees can work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. When it comes to treating others with respect, all employees are expected to play a lead role. Each person must assume personal responsibility to maintain respect in the workplace. APL is committed to ensuring that all employees are aware of the policy and that APL will investigate and resolve appropriately any complaint or report APL receives.

Adopted by the Board Oct. 19, 2017
Revised by the Board July 29, 2022