



PERSONNEL POLICY

SUBJECT: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND ANTI-BULLYING

DATE: January 1, 2017

Number: 341-16

I. Statement of Policy

The County is committed to providing all employees with a healthy and safe work environment. The County seeks to provide a work environment that minimizes workplace violence and bullying. Violence in the workplace poses a threat to the safety of employees and the public and affects employee morale and productivity. All employees are responsible for minimizing workplace violence. The procedures that accompany this policy are designed to minimize the threat of violence in the workplace, without restricting appropriate public access to County employees and facilities, and provide guidelines for responding promptly and effectively to workplace violence.

The County will not tolerate acts and behaviors that are likely to result in workplace violence and bullying. The County will also ensure that procedures exist to allow complaints of workplace violence and bullying to be dealt with and resolved within the County, without limiting any person's entitlement to pursue resolution of their complaint with the relevant statutory authority.

II. Background and Applicability

This policy applies to all Fulton County officials, employees, volunteers and contractors. It applies during normal working hours, at work related or sponsored functions, and while traveling on work related business.

III. Establishment and Implementation of Procedure

The County Manager, in consultation with the Chief Human Resources Officer and the County Attorney, is authorized to establish and modify, as needed, a procedure for implementing this policy.

These policies do not create a contract of employment. Employment for non-classified employees remains "at will".



PERSONNEL PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND ANTI-BULLYING

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I. Overview and Definitions

The County will not tolerate acts and behaviors that are likely to result in workplace violence and bullying, which may include, but are not limited to, abusive language, hitting or shoving, threats of bodily harm, threats or violence arising out of sexual or racial harassment, brandishing of an object which may be used as a weapon, insubordination, the sending of threatening, harassing or abusive e-mail and faxes, using the workplace to violate protective orders, and stalking.

Other terms relevant to the County's Workplace Violence and Anti-Violence policy and implementing procedures include the following:

- A. Threats of Violence: Actions or words that could be construed by a reasonable person as expressing an intent to cause another individual physical harm. Such behavior may be verbal or non-verbal, and may include intimidation, harassment, and/or coercion.
- B. Acts of Violence: Any act of violence as established by the criminal laws of the State of Georgia, Fulton County, or any city therein, including but not limited to, assault, battery and stalking.
- C. Workplace Violence: Any intentional act that inflicts, attempts to inflict, or threatens to inflict bodily harm on another person or that inflicts, attempts to inflict, or threatens to inflict, damage to property, whether committed by a County employee or by anyone else and which occurs in a County workplace, at a County site location or while an employee is engaged in County business.
- D. Workplace: All County property and any other locations where County employees are performing their job duties.

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- E. Bullying: Unwelcome or unreasonable behavior that demeans, intimidates or humiliates people either as individuals or as a group. Bullying behavior is often persistent and part of a pattern, but it can also occur as a single incident. It is usually carried out by an individual but can also be an aspect of group behavior. Examples:
- Verbal Communication- abusive and offensive language; insults; teasing; spreading rumors and innuendos; unreasonable criticism; and trivializing of work and achievements
 - Manipulating the work environment- isolating people from normal work interaction; excessive demands; and setting impossible deadlines
 - Psychological manipulation- unfairly blaming for mistakes; setting people up for failure; deliberate exclusion; practical jokes; belittling or disregarding opinions or suggestions; criticizing in public
- F. Mobbing: A particular type of bullying behavior carried out by a group rather than by an individual. Mobbing is the bullying or social isolation of a person through collective unjustified accusations, humiliation, general harassment or emotional abuse. Although it is a group behavior, specific incidents such as an insult or a practical joke may be carried out by an individual as part of mobbing behavior.

II. Reporting and Investigating

All employees shall promptly report workplace violence or bullying to their supervisors and/or Appointing Authority in accordance with the County's procedures. In an emergency situation, employees may report workplace violence to supervisory or managerial level employees other than their own supervisors. Upon receipt of a report of workplace violence or bullying, the supervisor and/or Appointing Authority shall immediately refer the matter to the Chief Human Resources Officer for investigation. In addition, where it is an employee's supervisor or Appointing Authority who has engaged in threatening, violent, intimidating or other abusive behavior, the employee does not have to report the behavior to their immediate supervisor or go through their supervisory chain of command. Rather, in such a circumstance, an employee is specifically authorized to bypass his/her supervisor (and supervisory chain of command) and report such conduct or behavior directly to the Chief Human Resources Officer.

It is the Chief Human Resource Officer's responsibility to oversee the investigation of all reported incidents involving workplace abuse, intimidation, or violence and report findings to the Appointing Authority (or his/her designee) who shall take immediate action as appropriate. Such investigation shall commence as soon as practicable and supervisors and Appointing Authorities are required to take reasonable steps to protect

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the alleged victim(s), including, but not limited to, separation of the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s).

III. Victim(s) of Violence and Bullying

Any employee who feels he or she has been victimized by bullying and/or workplace violence is encouraged to report the matter to his or her supervisor or Appointing Authority or to the Department of Human Resources Management. Where appropriate, an investigation will be undertaken and disciplinary measures will be taken as necessary by the Appointing Authority or his or her designee.

IV. Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action for violations of this policy and procedure shall be taken by the violator's Appointing Authority pursuant to the Discipline for Classified Employees Policy and Procedure (305-16), Article 13, D. Violations of this policy and procedure rising to the level of criminal acts shall be turned over to the proper law enforcement agency. In addition, violations of this policy may cause the violator to be immediately removed from the workplace.

While the County encourages all employees to raise any concern(s) under this policy and procedure, the County also recognizes that intentional or malicious false allegations can have a serious effect on innocent people. Any individual who knowingly falsely accuses another of a violation will be disciplined in accordance with the County Policies and Procedures up to, and including, dismissal.

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