

Section:	Human Resources – Employee Relations	Document No.:	6.8.2
VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT FREE WORKPLACE POLICY		Approval Date:	July 5, 2017
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OVERVIEW

Due to the nature of child protection work the Agency recognizes there are risks inherent in the provision of services to children, youth and their families. Notwithstanding this it does not accept that its employees be subjected to violence, threats or harassment from clients or members of the public.

Individuals are encouraged to report all incidents of violence as per the **Accident/Incident Reporting** procedure. All incidents shall be investigated promptly, fairly and effectively, and shall be done so in a manner that, if required, makes the necessary accommodations for either of the parties involved.

DEFINITIONS

Workplace:

Includes any location in which employees and/or volunteers are engaged in Agency business activities necessary to perform their assignments. This includes, but is not limited to, Agency buildings, employee/volunteer parking lots, employee/volunteer organized social events, field locations, client's homes, and during business related travel.

Workplace Violence:

- a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- b) an attempt to exercise physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- c) a statement or behavior that it is reasonable for the worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the work.

Harassment:

Harassment is any behavior that demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions, comments, or displays. It may be a single incident or continue over time

“Workplace harassment” means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. The normal exercise of management is neither harassment nor bullying.

“Workplace bullying” is usually described as repeated incidents or a pattern of behavior that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people. It can take the form of verbal abuse, offensive conduct or work interference (sabotage).

POLICY

The Agency will promote a violence and harassment free workplace for all and is committed to working in collaboration with its employees to recognize, manage and prevent acts of workplace violence and harassment.

The Agency shall make available to all employees, and post in designated areas, its policies on workplace violence and harassment.

The Agency shall review annually its policy on Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.

The Agency accepts an obligation to promote a violence free and harassment free workplace through the following:

Violence Free Workplace:

- Assessing and reassessing the risk of workplace violence
- Supporting the identification, prevention and/or resolution of potentially violent or unsafe work related situations;
- Encouraging the reporting of both internal and external workplace violence complaints and incidents including, where applicable, early signs thereof;
- Reviewing and dealing with reported incidents of workplace violence, and threats of same, individual and as potential, emerging patterns of preventable occurrences including police involvement as may be appropriate
- Providing all employees with education and training in appropriate approaches for managing violence and threats;
- Installing and maintaining appropriate building security measures at agency offices;
- Promoting and enforcing compliance with its code of conduct, including the prohibition to keep/maintain items of a toxic or dangerous nature at the workplace including firearms, knives or other weapons;
- Taking all reasonable precautions in the circumstances for the protection of an employee if the agency becomes aware of a domestic violence situation that would likely expose an employee to physical injury in the workplace.

Harassment Free Workplace

- Supporting the identification, prevention and/or resolution of potentially harassing behaviors;

- Encouraging the reporting of workplace harassment, complaints and incidents including, where applicable, early signs thereof;
- Reviewing and dealing with reported incidents of workplace harassment, and threats of same, individual and as potential, emerging patterns of preventable occurrences;
- Providing all employees with education and training in appropriate approaches for managing harassment and bullying;
- Taking all reasonable precautions in the circumstances for the protection of an employee if the agency becomes aware of a harassing and/or bullying behavior that would likely expose an employee to physical injury in the workplace.