

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library

PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

SUBJECT: Bullying Policy

CHAPTER: VIII

SECTION: 4

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1/1/2015

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library will not tolerate bullying behavior in any instance. Employees found in violation of this policy may be disciplined, up to and including termination.

The B&ECPL defines bullying as repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Bullying

Bullying may be intentional or unintentional. However, it must be noted that when an allegation of bullying is made, the intention of the alleged bully is irrelevant, and will not be given consideration when determining the

appropriate level of discipline. As in sexual harassment, it is the effect of the behavior on the individual that is important.

B. Types of Bullying

1. Verbal bullying: Slandering, ridiculing or maligning a person or his or her family; persistent name calling that is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; using a person as butt of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks.
2. Physical bullying: Pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping, assault or threat of physical assault, damage to a person's work area or property.
3. Gesture bullying: Nonverbal threatening gestures; glances that can convey threatening messages.
4. Exclusion: Socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in work-related activities.

C. Further Evidence of Bullying

1. Persistent singling out of one person.
2. Shouting or raising voice at an individual in public or in private.
3. Using verbal or obscene gestures.
4. Not allowing the person to speak or express him or herself (i.e., ignoring or interrupting).

5. Personal insults and use of offensive nicknames.
6. Public humiliation in any form.
7. Constant criticism on matters unrelated or minimally related to the person's job performance or description.
8. Ignoring or interrupting an individual at meetings.
9. Public reprimands.
10. Repeatedly accusing someone of errors that cannot be documented.
11. Deliberately interfering with mail and other communications.
12. Spreading rumors and gossip regarding individuals.
13. Encouraging others to disregard a supervisor's instructions.
14. Manipulating the ability of someone to do his or her work (e.g., overloading, underloading, withholding information, assigning meaningless tasks, setting deadlines that cannot be met, giving deliberately ambiguous instructions).
15. Inflicting menial tasks not in keeping with the normal responsibilities of the job.
16. Taking credit for another person's ideas.

17. Refusing reasonable requests for leave in the absence of work-related reasons not to grant leave.
18. Deliberately excluding an individual or isolating him or her from work-related activities, such as meetings.
19. Unwanted physical contact, physical abuse or threats of abuse to an individual or an individual's property (defacing or marking up property).

III. GUIDELINES

A. Reporting Bullying

1. The B&ECPL encourages individuals who believe they are being bullied to firmly and promptly notify the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome. However, the B&ECPL also recognizes that such a confrontation may be uncomfortable or even impossible.
2. In the event that such informal and direct communication between individuals cannot be accomplished for any reason or is ineffective or inappropriate, given the circumstances or severity of the situation, the following steps should be taken to report bullying.
3. Individuals who believe they have been or are currently being bullied should notify the appropriate staff of such incidents.
 - a. Employees, supervisors and managers should report any incident of bullying.

- b. Individuals who believe they have been bullied should immediately report the incident to his/her direct supervisor.
 - c. If the supervisor is the alleged bully or the employee is uncomfortable reporting the alleged bullying to the supervisor, the incident should be reported directly to the Department Head. In the event that the circumstances of the situation make it inappropriate to report the incident to the individual's supervisor or to his/her Department Head, the incident should be reported directly to the Assistant Deputy Director of Human Resources at 858-7190.
 - d. Supervisors and managers should report any incident of bullying even if they are not the target or victim of such bullying to the Assistant Deputy Director of Human Resources.
- 2. The B&ECPL encourages the prompt reporting of complaints so that a rapid response and appropriate action may be taken. Failure to promptly report a complaint can hinder an effective investigation. A prompt report not only aids the complainant but also helps to maintain an environment free from bullying for all employees.
- 3. Individuals who believe they have been or are currently being bullied should maintain a record of objectionable conduct in order to prepare effectively for the investigation.
 - a. An accurate record of objectionable behavior or misconduct is helpful to resolve a complaint of bullying.
 - b. Both verbal and written reports of bullying must be submitted to the Assistant Deputy Director of Human Resources for investigation.

B. Investigating the Complaint

1. Any allegation of bullying received by Human Resources will be investigated promptly.
2. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances.
3. The B&ECPL will investigate thoroughly and quickly any incident of bullying and will make every effort to take the wishes of the complainant into consideration, keeping the complainant informed as to the status of the investigation.

C. Discipline for Engaging In Harassment

Depending on the nature and seriousness of the offense, the B&ECPL will impose appropriate discipline, up to and including termination, against any manager, supervisor, or employee found to have engaged in any form of bullying.