

ANTI-HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The St. Bernard Parish Library is committed to providing an environment that is comfortable, safe and free from harassment of any kind. The Library expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice and harassment of any type.

Harassment can occur in person, in writing, by telephone (voice or text messaging), by fax, via the Internet (e-mail or instant messaging) or through any other means of communication. Harassment can be physical, verbal, non-verbal, or visual. Any type of harassment is a violation of this policy and will be cause for disciplinary action, including suspension without pay and termination. Any person found to have discriminated against, retaliated against or harassed any employee will be subject to appropriate discipline.

Any employee who feels that s/he has been the subject of harassment, sexual or otherwise, should report the incident to a supervisor, director, or the Library Board of Control. No individual making a report or participating in an investigation will be retaliated against even if a report made in good faith is not substantiated.

However, given the seriousness of the consequences for the accused, a false or frivolous report is a severe offense itself, is a violation of this Policy, and can itself result in disciplinary action.

State and Federal law prohibit discrimination and harassment toward individuals based on race, color, age, religion, creed, national origin, qualifying disability or sex/sexual orientation in all employment practices, including conditions of employment. Any physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct demonstrating hostility toward a person protected by established discrimination laws constitutes harassment.

Race/color harassment – most often occurs as offensive comments, epithets, jokes, slurs or gestures, or through symbolic objects or drawings. Even when the victim and harasser are the same race or when the victim is not a minority, race harassment is unlawful.

Age harassment – demeaning comments or conduct based on a person's age. It also can involve excluding an employee from certain activities or pressuring an employee to retire because of age.

Religious/creed harassment – usually involves jokes, comments or other demeaning conduct based on a person's affiliation with a particular religion or observance of religious holidays or dress. Coercing an employee to participate or not participate in religious activities also constitutes religious harassment.

National origin harassment – derogatory words or conduct aimed at an individual's nationality, ancestry, foreign name, accent, appearance or culture.

Disability harassment – occurs when an individual is subject to comments, ridicule or other demeaning conduct because of a perceived or actual disability.

Sexual harassment - characterized by unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal, or physical contact of a sexual nature that takes place under the following conditions: (1) submission to or rejection of this conduct by an individual is used explicitly or implicitly as a factor in decisions affecting hiring, evaluation, promotion, pay increases, termination or other aspects of employment, or (2) this conduct substantially interferes with an individual's employment or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment at work can occur as well when a person is subjected to negative treatment on the basis of gender, including situations involving members of the same or opposite sex.

The most severe and overt forms of sexual harassment are easiest to determine. However, some sexual harassment is more subtle and depends, to some extent, on individual perception and interpretation. In accordance with law, the Library will assess sexual harassment by a standard of what would offend a "reasonable person".

Examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Verbal: sexual innuendos, suggestive comments, insults, humor, jokes about sex, anatomy or gender-specific traits, sexual propositions, threats, repeated requests for dates, questions about an individual's sex life, or statements about other employees or of patrons, even outside of their presence, of a sexual nature
- b. Non-verbal: suggestive or insulting sounds (whistling), leering, obscene gestures, sexually suggestive bodily gestures, "catcalls", "smacking" or "kissing" noises
- c. Visual: posters, signs, pin-ups or slogans of a sexual nature, viewing pornographic material or websites
- d. Physical: touching, unwelcome hugging or kissing, pinching, brushing the body, any coerced sexual act or actual assault
- e. Textual/electronic: "sexting" (electronically sending messages with sexual content, including pictures or video) or the use of sexually explicit language; harassment as defined herein; cyber stalking using any type of device or platform, or threats via any forms of electronic communication (e-mail, text/picture/video messages, intranet/on-line posting, blogs, instant messages and social network websites like Facebook and Twitter).

Resolution

Employees often can stop or prevent sexual harassment by immediately and directly expressing their disapproval of an individual's sexually oriented attention or conduct. In many cases, an informal warning by the Director to an alleged harasser, combined with appropriate follow-up

supervision and monitoring of the employee's behavior might be sufficient to prevent or stop sexual harassment.

If this approach does not stop the harassment, a thorough and impartial investigation of all complaints will be conducted in a timely and appropriate manner.

Procedure

A complaint form must be completed and signed in order to investigate the complaint. As stated, all complaints will be investigated in a timely manner and full consideration will be given to all the facts presented. If it is found after investigation that the complaint is valid, appropriate action will be taken.

Reminder: The Library will not tolerate retaliation against any person for complaining about harassment. The Library also recognizes that false accusations of harassment can have serious effects on innocent people. We trust that everyone connected with the Library will act responsibly to keep our environment free from discrimination and harassment of any type.

Policy confirmed: 10/15/18

President, Library Board of Control: *Robert J. Casanova*

ANTI-HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT APPEAL FORM

Name of complainant (please print) _____

Date of appeal _____

Date of original complaint _____

Description of decision being appealed _____

Why is the decision being appealed? _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____