



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying in the Workplace Will Not be Tolerated.

The City of Fort Bragg understands that workplace bullying can take an emotional and physical toll and can lead to a more stressful environment. A recent study from the Workplace Bullying Institute has shown that the, "Prevalence of bullying is up 57 percent from 2017." This increase in bullying can also lead to workplace violence. Too often nowadays any major news outlets will have a headline about how workplace bullying led to violence. Occupations that commonly interact with the public have the highest levels of workplace violence. The strong nexus between bullying and violence is evident and the City of Fort Bragg would like to set forth a policy that will ensure everyone's safety and have a workplace free of violence.

The City of Fort Bragg is committed to promoting and maintaining a healthy working environment for its employees where every individual is treated with civility and respect. The City of Fort Bragg considers workplace bullying unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Purpose.

The purpose of this policy is to communicate to all employees, including supervisors, managers, and officials, that the City will not in any way tolerate this behavior and will establish a strong commitment to prohibit and prevent workplace bullying and to set forth a procedure for investigating and resolving internal complaints.

Statement of policy.

This policy prohibits workplace bullying by and against city employees, applicants for employment, and others in the workplace environment, including members of the public. Bullying may be directed toward an employee by a department head, manager, supervisor, co-worker, subordinate, appointing authority, elected official, vendor, contractor, or member of the public.

Definitions -- Bullying.

Workforce Bullying is intentional behavior by any employee, supervisor, elected official, member of the public, vendor, non-employee, contractor, or appointed official aimed at an individual employee or group of employees that a reasonable person would find hostile, intimidating, offensive, or intended to create an abusive work environment whether verbal, written or electronic.

Examples of bullying in the workplace include but are not limited to the following:

(1) *Bullying in general.*

- a. Use of disrespectful and devaluing language. Verbal abuse such as the use of derogatory remarks, insults, name-calling, and epithets.
- b. Persistent or constant criticism in front of other persons (including co-workers, vendors, contractors, or members of the public) to humiliate another employee. Persistent phone calls, voicemails, emails, or postings to or about another person.
- c. Stalking employees inside or outside of the workplace, or causing them to be stalked or harassed, or intimidated by others.
- d. Attempting to exploit an employee's known psychological or physical vulnerability (which may also be a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act).
- f. Behavior or language that frightens, humiliates, belittles, or degrades, including criticism that is delivered with yelling and screaming along with unreasonable public criticism, reprimands, or trivializing of another's work.
- g. Workplace bullying is not limited to the work site or workplace and may exist in any public or private venue, worksite, or workplace. Workplace bullying is prohibited conduct that is aimed at the individual employee, regardless of venue, by a co-worker, supervisor, elected official, member of the public, or appointed official, that under an objective review a reasonable person, confronted with the same or similar circumstances, would find to be hostile, intimidating, offensive, or intended to create an abusive work environment.
- h. Any employee who believes he or she has been subjected to offensive; and harassing behavior by a co-worker, member of the public, elected official, supervisor, or vendor has an obligation to directly inform the offending person that the conduct is offensive and must stop and should report the situation.

(2) *Bullying by supervisor.*

- a. Making up arbitrary rules that only apply to the targeted employee and assigning undesirable work as punishment.
- b. Managing by threat and intimidation and preventing access to opportunities.
- c. Being given tasks with unreasonable, impossible, or constantly changing objectives and/or deadlines.
- d. Removing key areas of responsibility and/or replacing them with more trivial or unpleasant tasks for no business-related reason.

- e. Denying access to necessary information, consultation, training, or resources and or withholding essential information or purposefully giving incorrect information.
 - f. Constantly criticizing a subordinate employee's actions outside the scope of reasonable disciplinary efforts.
- (3) *Bullying by co-workers (to include supervisors).*
- a. Using confidential information to humiliate privately or publicly or withholding information that affects an employee's performance.
 - b. Intimidating an employee through inappropriate personal comments, disparaging opinions, or criticism with no basis in fact.
 - c. Taking credit for another employee's work or repeatedly belittling a co-worker (whether publicly or privately).
- (4) *Bullying by sabotage.*
- a. Falsely accusing an employee of making errors, or ensuring the failure of an employee's project by not performing required tasks, such as sign-offs, taking calls, working with collaborators, etc.
 - c. Undermining or deliberately impeding an employee's work.
- (5) *Bullying by shunning.*
- a. Isolating an employee from co-workers, in workplace social events, or physically, or purposely excluding an employee from an essential meeting.
 - b. Launching a campaign not based on facts to provoke an employee to leave or be removed.
 - c. Excluding employees from matters in which they would be expected to be included as part of the job.

Encourage to Report

The City encourages all employees to report any instance of bullying behavior. Any reports of this type will be treated seriously and promptly dealt with.

Complaint Procedure

When an employee believes that he or she is the target of behavior that may satisfy the definition of workplace bullying (as defined herein), the employee may report any and all incidents immediately to their supervisor, City Manager, and or the human resources department. Employees who believe they are the target of bullying are not required to confront the alleged bully, other than informing the alleged bully that the bullying conduct is unwelcome and should stop.

- An employee who believes that he or she has been subject to bullying should immediately bring the behavior to the attention of their supervisor and the City Manager or the human resource department.

- A complainant who believes they have been a subject of bullying behavior may use the City's complaint procedures to resolve bullying complaints.
- Complaints of bullying are encouraged to be submitted in writing. A complaint may be submitted by using the City's Anti-Bullying Incident report form. All complaints must be signed or attested to by the individual making the complaint.
- If the employee's supervisor or other managers in the employee's chain of command is the source of the bullying, or if the employee is otherwise uncomfortable discussing the matter with a supervisor, the employee may contact the human resources department and City Manager.
- Following completion of the City's Anti-Bullying Incident report by the complainant, all complaints will be investigated.
- In general, the formal investigation will include interviews with the complainant, the person alleged to have engaged in bullying, and any witnesses identified.
- In conducting the investigation, the City of Fort Bragg will respect the privacy of all concerned and will maintain confidentiality to the fullest extent possible.

Mandatory cooperation.

All employees, supervisors, managers, and agents of the City shall cooperate with any investigative process or resolution, whether informal or formal. Any City employee who fails to cooperate and/or attempts to undermine and/or discourage participation in an investigation will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. To enable the City to achieve the goals of this policy, the human resources department shall have access to all relevant and necessary information.

Non-Retaliation.

The City of Fort Bragg will not tolerate retaliation against employees making a good faith report of bullying, even where the reported concerns are unsubstantiated. This policy prohibits any retaliatory conduct (such as threats, intimidation, reprisals, harassment, incivility, and other adverse actions) against any employee who reports bullying, assists someone with a report of bullying, or participates in an investigation or resolution of a bullying complaint.

Any employee bringing a complaint under this policy, or assisting in the investigation of such a complaint, will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of

employment, nor discharged because of the complaint. Anyone who engages in retaliatory action will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Retaliation is defined as an activity that may dissuade a reasonable person from exercising his or her rights under this policy.

Confidentiality.

To the extent feasible, the information provided in the complaint and investigation process at both the informal and formal levels will be treated as confidential. However, the City will disclose the information if deemed reasonably necessary to investigate and take appropriate corrective action, to defend such corrective action, and/or if required by law.