

City of Stamford and Stamford Board of Education ZERO TOLERANCE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

Introduction:

The City of Stamford and Stamford Board of Education are committed to providing, in so far as they reasonably can do so, a safe environment for working and conducting business. The City/Board will not tolerate any acts of violence committed by or against City/Board employees, or members of the public, while on City of Stamford/Board of Education property or while performing City of Stamford/Board of Education business at other locations. The City values its employees and with this Policy the City and Board affirm their commitment to providing a workplace that is free from potential violence.

In order to carry out this commitment, the City of Stamford and Stamford Board of Education adopt this “**Zero Tolerance Workplace Violence Policy**” for its employees and will employ the strictest enforcement proceedings against employees, citizens and vendors who work for, or do business with, the City and/or Board.

Policy Goals and Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to achieve the following:

1. *Reduce the potential for violence in and around the workplace;*
2. *Encourage and foster a work environment that is characterized by respect and healthy conflict resolution; and*
3. *Mitigate the negative consequences for employees who experience or encounter violence in their work lives.*

Definitions

The word “violence” in this policy shall mean an act or behavior that includes one or more of the following:

- *is physically assaultive;*
- *a reasonable person would perceive as obsessively directed, e.g. intensely focused on a grudge, grievance, or romantic interest in another person, and reasonably likely to result in harm or threats of harm to persons or property;*
- *consists of a communicated or reasonably perceived threat to harm another individual or in any way endanger the safety of an individual;*
- *would be interpreted by a reasonable person as conveying potential harm to the individual;*
- *is a behavior, or action, that a reasonable person would perceive as menacing;*
- *involves carrying or displaying weapons, destroying property, or throwing objects in a manner reasonably perceived to be threatening; or*
- *consists of a communicated or reasonably perceived threat to destroy property.*

Specific examples of conduct that may be considered threats or acts of violence under this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Hitting or shoving an individual.*
- *Threatening to harm an individual or his/her family, friends, associates, or their property.*
- *The intentional destruction or threat of destruction of property owned, operated, or controlled by the City of Stamford or Stamford Board of Education.*
- *Making harassing or threatening telephone calls, letters or other forms of written or electronic communications.*
- *Intimidating or attempting to coerce an employee to do wrongful acts that would affect the business interests of the City and/or Board of Education.*
- *Harassing surveillance, also known as “stalking”, the willful, malicious and repeated following of another person and making a credible threat with intent to place the other person in reasonable fear of his or her safety.*
- *Making a suggestion of harm or intimidation or stating that an act to injure persons or property is “appropriate”.*
- *Unauthorized possession or inappropriate use of firearms, weapons, or any other dangerous devices on City/Board property, or in the course of City/Board business.*

While employees of the City may be required as a condition of their work assignment to possess firearms, weapons or other dangerous devices, or permitted to carry them as authorized by law, it is the City’s policy that employees are to use them only in accordance with departmental operating procedures and all applicable State and Federal laws.

Citizen, Client and Vendor Interaction

Employees in many departments interact with citizens, clients and/or vendors who are distressed and who may make threats or commit acts of violence. The City and the Board will provide support and guidance as deemed appropriate, to employees so that threats of violence can be recognized and addressed and potentially prevented.

Citizen violence may be difficult to control and some employee exposure may be a result of working with citizen/patient populations in specific settings ie Smith House, Police and Fire Departments. The handling of some citizen violence situations may be the function of local law enforcement agencies. **As a matter of policy, the City of Stamford and Stamford Board of Education will not tolerate violent acts or threats of violence by clients, vendors or other members of the public towards or against its employees.**

Family Members or Acquaintances

If the workplace is affected by a violent act or threat of violence by an employee's family member or acquaintance, the City of Stamford will provide access to support and guidance for the victim and any other affected co-workers. **As a matter of policy, the City of Stamford and Stamford Board of Education will not tolerate violent acts or threats of violence by family members or acquaintances of City employees toward employees.**

Employees

The City of Stamford and Stamford Board of Education will not tolerate violent acts or threats of violence, verbal or implied, by employees. In such cases the City will impose immediate and definitive use of the disciplinary process, up to and including termination of City employment. If appropriate, criminal prosecution will also be pursued in addition to the disciplinary process.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The City has established an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Any troubled employee may request and will be entitled to receive guidance and, if necessary, professional help from the City's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). By working with employees with personal problems, the EAP may assist in addressing potential violence before it occurs. Employees are encouraged to access the EAP in accordance with the conditions under which it operates.

Reporting Violations

Any employee who experiences or witnesses an act or threat of violence is directed to immediately report such policy violation to his/her immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Division.

Department heads and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that this Policy is implemented in their respective Department. Employee safety and the safety of the public must be every department head, manager or supervisors highest concern. When made aware of a real or perceived threat of violence, management, regardless of their level, must contact the Human Resources Division immediately at #977-4070, or the Board of Education - Personnel Department at 977-4097. Human Resources will initiate an immediate and thorough investigation, provide support for employees and supervisors and take specific actions to prevent acts of violence from occurring.

If necessary, in circumstances that so require, employees and/or supervisors should not hesitate to contact the Stamford Police Department directly at #911.