

Mystic & Noank Library

Workplace Threats and Violence Policy

I. Overview and Policy

The safety and security of its employees, customers and visitors is of vital importance to the Mystic & Noank Library. We will strive to ensure that the workplace is as safe as possible and free from violence of any kind. We maintain a “Zero Tolerance” standard with respect to violence or threats of violence. Violent or violently threatening behavior of any kind, including implied or direct threats of violence, is prohibited at the Library or at any Library-sponsored event. Such conduct is prohibited by or against any employees, patrons, visitors, or business associates even when the employee is not at the Library working.

Violations of this policy will lead to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment. In addition, violent threats or action will be reported to law enforcement authorities. No existing Library policy, practice or procedure should be interpreted to prohibit decisions designed to prevent a threat from being carried out, a violent act from occurring, or a life-threatening situation from developing.

While we will make every attempt to ensure a violence-free workplace, nothing in the policy shall be interpreted as a guarantee by the Library to protect any person, including any employee, from willful or reckless acts by others.

II. Definitions and Prohibited Conduct

Workplace violence is defined as behavior in which an employee, former employee, customer, business associate or visitor to a Library workplace inflicts or threatens to inflict damage to property, or cause serious harm, injury or death to others in the workplace, on Library property, at Library-sponsored events, or offsite directed at a Library employee as a result of the employee’s working in the Library.

The Library prohibits employees, patrons, visitors and business associates, with the exception of law enforcement personnel, from bringing onto Library property, any weapons or dangerous instruments as defined below or dangerous animals and/or pets of any kind. The Library prohibits employees, patrons, visitors or other business associates from attempting to use, or threatening to use, any weapon or dangerous instrument at the Library.

Weapon means any firearm, including a BB gun, pellet gun, whether loaded or unloaded, any knife (excluding a small pen or pocketknife), including a switchblade or other knife having an automatic spring release device, a stiletto, any police baton or nightstick or any martial arts weapon or electronic defense weapon.

Dangerous instrument means any instrument, article, or substance that, under the circumstances, is capable of causing death or physical injury, including, but not limited to, explosives, fireworks, other incendiary devices, poisonous substances, and chemicals. It does not include instruments that normally would not be dangerous if used for the purpose for which they were intended, such as pens and pencils.

Violent or threatening behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following prohibited behaviors directed at an employee, patron, visitor or other individual:

Striking, hitting, punching, slapping, injuring or threatening a person with such action;

Fighting or challenging another person to a fight;

Any aggressive touching, pinching, grabbing of another person;

Engaging in dangerous or threatening horseplay;

Threatening or causing harm or damage to another person or another person's property;

Committing a violent felony or misdemeanor at work or on Library property;

Any act that a reasonable person would perceive as constituting a threat or fear of injury, emotional distress or violence.

Employees, patrons, visitors, and business associates are prohibited from causing, or threatening to cause, physical injury to any individual at the Library, or intentionally causing, or threatening to cause, property damage. Any person attempting to use, or threatening to use, any weapon or dangerous instrument at the Library or who engages in violent or threatening behavior on Library property shall be removed from the premises and shall remain off the premises pending the outcome of an investigation. Subsequent to the investigation, the Library will initiate an appropriate response. This response may include, but is not limited to, suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment, and/or criminal prosecution of the person(s) involved.

III. Reporting Potential or Actual Violence or Threats of Violence

Employees must inform their supervisor if an employee, customer, vendor, other business associate, visitor, guest, or other third part on the premises, on a telephone call (or other communication device), through email, via social media, or by other means, exhibits behavior

which could be a sign of a potentially dangerous or threatening situation in the workplace. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Discussing weapons or bringing them to the workplace;
- Displaying overt signs of extreme stress, resentment, hostility, or anger;
- Making threatening remarks;
- Displaying irrational or threatening behavior;
- Abrupt or negative changes in mood or behavior;
- Threatening social media postings.

Any employee who has been a victim of violence, believes they have been threatened with violence or has witnessed an act or threat of workplace violence towards anyone else should take the following steps:

- If an emergency exists and the situation involves the potential for imminent danger, the employee should immediately call 9-1-1, and take appropriate steps as directed by law enforcement officials and take whatever steps are appropriate or necessary to protect himself or herself from harm.
- The employee should report the act or threat of violence to his or her supervisor or other management personnel as soon as possible. Even without an actual threat, employees should also report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent. Employees also should report any situation that gives them reason to believe that future workplace violence may occur. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person or persons who were threatened or were the focus of the threatening behavior.

If You Are Confronted

If you are confronted by anyone who is angry, hostile, shouting, swearing, threatening violence, or engaging in dangerous behavior:

- Stay calm.
- Be courteous and patient, but maintain your distance from the individual.
- Signal a coworker or supervisor that you need help.
- Have a coworker or supervisor call the local police.
- Never try to grab a weapon from someone else.
- Watch for a safe chance to go to a safe area.

Domestic Violence and Restraining Orders

Domestic Violence can significantly impact workplace safety and the productivity of victims at work. Domestic violence includes abuse committed against a spouse or former spouse, domestic partner or former domestic partner, a cohabitant or former cohabitant, other household members, or any person with whom the victim has or had a romantic relationship. Abuse includes any intentional or reckless attempt to cause bodily harm, sexual assault, threatening behavior, harassment, stalking, making harassing phone calls, and similar conduct.

Any employee who has obtained a protective or restraining order against any individual based on a potential act or threat of violence, domestic violence, stalking or harassment, that restricts the behavior of the individual and that would make the individual in violation of the order by coming near them at work, must provide a copy of the order to Director or Assistant Director.

IV. Investigation

Any report or complaint of workplace violence or threat of violence will be promptly investigated. The employee who is alleged to have engaged in violence or threatened violence may be placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. Additional steps may also be taken to ensure, to the greatest extent feasible, the welfare and safety of employees. The investigation will include interviewing any witnesses, examining the scene of the incident, and considering security risk factors. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the Library will determine what corrective action will be taken and what mitigating measures to take to prevent future recurrence of any violence or threat. The results of the investigation, including findings and actions taken, will be documented.

See Also:

- Harassment Prevention Policy

Approved July 12, 2022

Mystic & Noank Library Board of Trustees