

Bullying Prevention and Reporting

POLICY

The University is committed to maintaining an environment that is free from all acts of bullying by or against employees, students, or members of the public. The University is committed to ensuring trust and respect for all persons in an environment that cultivates individual and institutional integrity in all that we do.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying, or nondiscriminatory harassment, refers to *repeated*, unreasonable actions of individuals (or a group) directed towards an employee or student (or a group of employees or students), which intimidate, degrade, humiliate, or undermine; or which create a risk to the health or safety of the employee or student. Workplace bullying often involves an abuse or misuse of power, but not all bullying behavior involves a power differential.

Examples of possible workplace bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Spreading false and malicious rumors, gossip, or innuendo.
- Systematically excluding or isolating a person or group (socially singling out).
- Undermining or impeding another person's work.
- Repeatedly stealing or taking credit for work done by others.
- Belittling a person's opinion.
- Yelling, insulting, humiliating, or using profanity to harm, undermine, or intimidate others.

The above examples include using electronic technology such as email, social media sites, text messages, and websites for bullying.

The following is a noninclusive list of behaviors that are not defined as bullying or harassing:

- Expressing differences of opinion.
- Offering constructive feedback, guidance, or advice about work-related behavior.
- Reasonable action taken by a supervisor relating to the management of an office.

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Definition of Bullying (cont.)

- Reasonable action taken to manage an employee's performance, initiating corrective action and/or disciplinary action.

Behavior that constitutes bullying may also violate, and be subject to action under, other University policies and/or state or federal laws.

Retaliation and Interference Prohibited

Retaliation against any person for bringing forward or participating in the investigation of a complaint under the workplace bullying policy is prohibited. Such acts may form independent grounds for taking appropriate corrective or disciplinary action against the perpetrator.

Interference with the complaint or investigation process is also prohibited and constitutes a violation of the workplace bullying policy. Interference includes, but is not limited to, actions that dissuade or attempt to dissuade complainants or witnesses from reporting or participating in an investigation, or actions that delay or disrupt, or attempt to delay or disrupt, an investigation.

Acts of retaliation or interference must be immediately reported to Human Resource Services (HRS).

Applicability

Except where otherwise indicated, this policy applies to:

- All levels and areas of University operations and programs.
- Students, faculty, and staff.
- Visitors, vendors, volunteers, and all other personnel.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All individuals as noted above must refrain from bullying behavior and are encouraged to seek assistance to resolve personal issues that may lead to bullying behaviors.

Employees

Employees are strongly encouraged to report any incident of workplace bullying to an immediate manager or supervisor. If the immediate manager or supervisor is the perpetrator of the bullying, employees should report the incident to the next level higher supervisor or to HRS.

NOTE: Repeated unfounded complaints of workplace bullying may constitute misconduct or employee abuse.

Managers/Supervisors

Managers and supervisors who witness or receive a report of workplace bullying must contact HRS.

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Complaint Process

The goal of reporting bullying complaints to a supervisor, or next level higher supervisor, is to resolve the issue at the lowest level and as quickly as possible. If the complaint is not resolved at the supervisory level, the complainant may contact HRS directly.

Informal Complaint Options

Following are informal complaint options for employees:

- Meet with a supervisor and seek advice on addressing the employee's concerns.
- Request a supervisor intervene on the employee's behalf.
- Request an informal meeting with the alleged offender and the employee's supervisor, or the alleged offender's supervisor.

Other Resources

Other resources available to employees and supervisors include, but are not limited to the following:

- Human Resource Services (HRS)
 - Pullman 509-335-4521
 - Spokane 509-358-7553
 - Tri-Cities 509-372-7302
 - Vancouver 360-546-9595
- Employee Assistance Program; telephone 1-877-313-4455 (see *BPPM* 60.86).
- Office of the University Ombudsman; telephone 509-335-1195.
- Compliance and Civil Rights; telephone 509-335-8288.
- Workplace Concern Resolution Process (contact HRS). (See *BPPM* 50.30).

Formal Complaint Procedure

Employees may report workplace bullying directly to HRS. The complainant completes the Workplace Bullying Incident Report Form to initiate a review. HRS gathers information to determine if the perpetrator's behavior is a violation of the Workplace Bullying Policy. HRS informs the complainant, the respondent, and relevant WSU administrators of the outcome of the review.

NOTE: HRS does not release information regarding what, if any, personnel action is taken against an employee, unless required otherwise by law.

SAFETY AND SECURITY
50.31.4
Revised 5-17
Finance and Administration
509-335-5524
Human Resource Services
509-335-4521

BUSINESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

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Formal Complaint
Procedure (cont.)

HRS notifies Compliance and Civil Rights if the bullying behavior implicates *Executive Policy Manual* EP15.

Sanctions/Consequences

Workplace bullying on University property or facilities, at University events, or while on University business, is not to be tolerated or ignored. Individuals who engage in workplace bullying may be subject to corrective and/or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or expulsion, or other action as determined appropriate by the appointing authority, in consultation with HRS.

Students who engage in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Standards of Conduct for Students.