

Title: Productive Work Environment/Anti-Bullying
Policy Number: 105
Effective Date: July 1, 2009
Revision Date:
Authorized by: Board of Supervisors

Policy:

Pottawattamie County is committed to providing all employees with a healthy and safe work environment. Pottawattamie County strictly prohibits bullying. Pottawattamie County will ensure that procedures exist to allow complaints of bullying in the workplace to be dealt with and resolved within Pottawattamie County without limiting any person's ability to pursue resolution of their complaint under the law. Pottawattamie County is committed to the elimination of all forms of bullying.

Comments:

- (1) This policy applies to all employees of Pottawattamie County. It applies during normal working hours, at work-related or sponsored functions, and while traveling on work related business.
- (2) Bullying is unwelcome or unreasonable behavior that demeans, intimidates or humiliates people either as individuals or as a group. Bullying behavior is often persistent and part of a pattern, but it can also occur as a single incident. It is usually carried out by an individual but can also be an aspect of group behavior (mobbing). Some examples of bullying behavior include but are not limited to:
 - Abusive and offensive language
 - Insults
 - Teasing
 - Spreading rumor and innuendo
 - Unreasonable criticism
 - Trivializing of work and achievements
 - Isolating people from normal work interaction
 - Setting people up for failure
 - Deliberate exclusion
 - Practical jokes
 - Belittling or disregarding opinions or suggestions
 - Criticizing in public
- (3) Context is important in understanding bullying, particularly verbal communication. There is a difference between friendly insults exchanged by long-time co-workers and comments that are meant to be, or are taken

as, demeaning. While care should be exercised, particularly if a person is reporting alleged bullying as a witness, it is better to be genuinely mistaken than to let actual bullying go unreported.

- (4) Any employee who witnesses bullying has a responsibility for pointing out the behavior and is required to report the bullying to their direct supervisor. Any employee who believes he/she is being victimized by bullying is encouraged to point out the offensive behavior to the person responsible, and, request that the offensive behavior stop.
- (5) Any employee who is not comfortable approaching the person responsible for the bullying or whose request to stop was unsuccessful must report the bullying to their supervisor or to the Department Head as soon as possible. The Department Head or supervisor shall notify the Human Resources Director immediately of any bullying complaints. If the employee feels uncomfortable reporting the behavior to their supervisor or Department Head or if the Department Head is responsible for the behavior, the employee should report the behavior to the Human Resources Director and/or County Attorney.
- (6) Employees who observe bullying behavior in the workplace have a responsibility to report their observations to their supervisor or Department Head. The County prohibits any form of retaliation against employees for bringing forth complaints or providing information about bullying. Employees may not file complaints as a means of bullying another employee.
- (7) Complaints will be handled and investigated, unless special procedures are considered appropriate by the County Attorney. All complaints of bullying will be investigated promptly and in as impartial and confidential a manner as possible. Employees are required to cooperate in any investigation. A timely resolution of each complaint should be reached and communicated to the parties involved.
- (8) Any employee, supervisor, or Department Head who is found to have violated the Anti-Bullying policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.