

Sexual Harassment

The Sayville Library is committed to maintaining a workplace free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of workplace discrimination. All employees are required to work in a manner that prevents sexual harassment in the workplace. This Policy is one component of the Library's commitment to a discrimination-free work environment. Sexual harassment is against the law and all employees possess a legal right to a workplace free from sexual harassment; employees are urged to report sexual harassment by filing a complaint internally within the Library. Employees can also file a complaint with a governmental agency or in court under federal, state or local antidiscrimination laws, as applicable.

Policy:

1. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees, applicants for employment, interns, whether paid or unpaid, contractors and persons conducting business, regardless of immigration status, with the Library. In document, the term "employees" is to refer to this collective group.
2. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Any employee or individual covered by this policy who engages in sexual harassment or retaliation will be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary action (e.g., counseling, suspension, termination).
3. **Retaliation Prohibition:** No person covered by this Policy shall be subject to adverse action as a result of reporting an incident of sexual harassment, providing information; or otherwise assisting in any investigation of a sexual harassment complaint. The Sayville Library will not tolerate retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports or provides information concerning suspected sexual harassment. Any employee of the who retaliates against anyone involved in a sexual harassment investigation will be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. All employees, paid or unpaid interns, or non-employees working in the workplace who believe they have been subject to such retaliation should inform a supervisor, manager, or Library Director. All employees who believe they have been a target of such retaliation may also seek relief in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.
4. Sexual harassment is offensive, is a violation of Library policies, is unlawful, and may subject the Library to liability for harm to targets of sexual harassment. Harassers may also be individually subject to liability. Employees of every level who engage in sexual harassment, including management and trustees who engage in sexual harassment or who allow such behavior to continue, will be penalized for such misconduct.
5. The Library will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation that ensures due process for all parties whenever management receives a complaint alleging sexual harassment, or otherwise is aware of possible sexual harassment occurring. The Library will maintain an investigation as confidential to the extent legally permitted. Effective corrective action will be taken whenever sexual harassment is found to have occurred. All employees, are required to cooperate with any internal investigation of sexual harassment.

6. All employees are encouraged to report any harassment or behaviors that violate this policy. The Library will provide all employees complaint forms for them to report harassment by filing complaints.
7. Managers and supervisors are required to report any complaint that they receive, or any harassment that they observe or become aware of, to the Library Director or the President of the Board of Trustees if the Library Director is the subject of the complaint.
8. This policy is to be provided to all employees and is to be posted prominently in all work locations to the extent practicable (for example, in a main office, not an offsite work location) and be provided to employees upon hiring.

Definition: Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is unlawful under federal and state law. Sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, self-identified or perceived sex, gender expression, gender identity and the status of being transgender.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct which is either of a sexual nature, or which is directed at an individual because of that individual's sex when:

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, even if the reporting individual is not the intended target of the sexual harassment;
- Such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is utilized as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment.

A sexually harassing hostile work environment may include, but is not limited to, words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation or physical violence which are of a sexual nature, or which are directed at an individual because of that individual's sex. Sexual harassment also consists of any unwanted verbal or physical advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminatory remarks which are offensive or objectionable to the recipient, which cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation or which interfere with the recipient's job performance.

Sexual harassment also occurs when a person in authority seeks to extract job benefits for sexual favors. This can involve hiring, promotion, continued employment or any other terms, conditions or privileges of employment. This is referenced as "quid pro quo" sexual harassment.

Any employee who believes he or she has been harassed should report so that any violation of this policy can be corrected promptly. Any harassing conduct, even a single incident, is to be addressed under this policy.

Examples of sexual harassment: The following portrays some of the types of acts that may be unlawful sexual harassment and that are strictly prohibited:

- Physical acts of a sexual nature, such as:

- Touching, pinching, patting, kissing, hugging, grabbing, brushing against another employee's body or poking another employee's body;
 - Rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults.
- Unwanted sexual advances or propositions, such as:
 - Requests for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning the target's job performance evaluation, a promotion, other job benefits or detriments to employment;
 - Subtle or obvious pressures for unwelcome sexual activities.
 - Sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks or jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience, which create a hostile work environment.
 - Sexual stereotyping or citing conduct or appearance deemed as non-conforming.
 - Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the workplace, such as: Displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional material, reading materials or other materials that are sexually demeaning or pornographic. This includes sexual displays on workplace computers or cell phones and sharing such displays while in the workplace.
 - Hostile actions taken against an individual because of that individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or the status of being transgender, such as:
 - Interfering with, destroying or damaging a person's workstation, tools or equipment, or otherwise interfering with the individual's ability to perform;
 - Sabotaging an individual's work;
 - Bullying, yelling, name-calling.

Who can be a target of sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment can victimize any individuals, regardless of their sex or gender. New York State Law protects employees. Harassers can be superiors, subordinates, coworkers or anyone in the workplace including independent contractors, contract workers, vendors, clients, customers or visitors.

Where can sexual harassment occur?

Unlawful sexual harassment is not limited to the physical workplace itself. It can occur while employees are traveling for business or at employer sponsored events or parties. Calls, texts, emails, and social media usage by employees can constitute unlawful workplace harassment, even if they occur away from the workplace premises, on personal devices or during non-work hours.

Retaliation: Unlawful retaliation can be any action that could tend to discourage a worker from coming forward to make or support a sexual harassment claim. Adverse action need not be job-related or occur in the workplace to constitute unlawful retaliation (e.g., threats of physical violence outside of work hours).

Such retaliation is unlawful under federal and state law. The New York State Human Rights Law protects any individual who has engaged in “protected activity.” Protected activity occurs when a person has:

- made a complaint of sexual harassment, either internally or with any anti-discrimination agency;
- testified or assisted in a proceeding involving sexual harassment under the Human Rights Law or other anti-discrimination law;
- opposed sexual harassment by making a verbal or informal complaint to management, or by simply informing a supervisor or manager of harassment;
- reported that another employee has been sexually harassed; or
- encouraged a fellow employee to report harassment.

Even if the alleged harassment does not turn out to rise to the level of a violation of law, the individual is protected from retaliation if the person had a good faith belief that the practices were unlawful. However, the retaliation provision is not intended to protect persons making intentionally false charges of harassment.

Reporting Sexual Harassment: Preventing sexual harassment is everyone’s responsibility. The Library cannot prevent or remedy sexual harassment unless it knows about it. Any employee who has been subjected to behavior that may constitute sexual harassment is encouraged to report such behavior to a supervisor, the Library Director or Board President (if the Director is the subject of the complaint). Anyone who witnesses or becomes aware of potential instances of sexual harassment should also report such behavior.

Reports of sexual harassment may be made verbally or in writing. A form for submission of a written complaint is available in the Employee Handbook, in the forms folder of the staff computer network and from administration. All employees are encouraged to use this complaint form. Employees who are reporting sexual harassment on behalf of other employees should use the complaint form and note that it is on another employee’s behalf.

Employees who believe they have been a target of sexual harassment may also seek assistance in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.

Supervisory Responsibilities: All supervisors and managers who receive a complaint or information concerning suspected sexual harassment, observe what may be sexually harassing behavior or for any reason suspect that sexual harassment is occurring, **are required** to report such suspected sexual harassment to the Library Director or Board President (if the Director is the subject of the complaint).

In addition to being subject to discipline if they engaged in sexually harassing conduct themselves, supervisors will be subject to discipline for failing to report suspected sexual harassment or otherwise knowingly allowing sexual harassment to continue.

Supervisors will also be subject to discipline for engaging in any retaliation.

Complaint and Investigation of Sexual Harassment: *All* complaints or information alleging sexual harassment will be investigated, whether that information was reported in verbal or written form. Investigations will be conducted in a timely manner, and will be confidential to the extent legally possible.

An investigation of any complaint, information or knowledge of suspected sexual harassment will be prompt and thorough, commenced immediately and completed as soon as possible. The investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible. All persons involved, including complainants, witnesses and alleged harassers will be accorded due process, as outlined below, to protect their rights to a fair and impartial investigation.

Any employee may be required to cooperate as needed in an investigation of suspected sexual harassment. The Library will not tolerate retaliation against employees who file complaints, support another's complaint or participate in an investigation regarding a violation of this policy.

While the process may vary from case to case, investigations should be done in accordance with the following steps:

- Upon receipt of a complaint, conduct an immediate review of the allegations, and take any interim actions (e.g., instructing the respondent to refrain from communications with the complainant), as appropriate. If a complaint is verbal, encourage the individual to complete the "Complaint Form" in writing. If he or she refuses, prepare a Complaint Form based on the verbal reporting.
- If documents, emails or phone records are relevant to the investigation, take steps to obtain and preserve them.
- Request and review all relevant documents, including all electronic communications.
- Interview all parties involved, including any relevant witnesses;
- Create a written documentation of the investigation (such as letters, memos or emails), which contains the following:
 - A list of all documents reviewed, along with a detailed summary of relevant documents;
 - A list of names of those interviewed, along with a detailed summary of their statements;
 - A timeline of events;
 - A summary of prior relevant incidents, reported or unreported; and
 - The basis for the decision and final resolution of the complaint, together with any corrective action(s).
- Maintain the written documentation and associated documents in a secure and confidential location.
- Promptly notify the individual who reported and the individual(s) about whom the complaint was made of the final determination and implement any corrective actions identified in the written document.

- Inform the individual who reported of the right to file a complaint or charge externally as outlined below.

Legal Protections and External Remedies: Sexual harassment is not only prohibited by the Library but is also prohibited by state and federal law.

Aside from the internal process at the Library, employees may also choose to pursue legal remedies with the following governmental entities. While a private attorney is not required to file a complaint with a governmental agency, employees may seek the legal advice of an attorney.

State Human Rights Law (HRL): The Human Rights Law (HRL), codified as N.Y. Executive Law, Art. 15, § 290 et seq., applies to all employers in New York State with regard to sexual harassment, and protects employees regardless of immigration status. A complaint alleging violation of the Human Rights Law may be filed either with the Division of Human Rights (DHR) or in New York State Supreme Court.

Complaints with the DHR may be filed any time **within one year** of the harassment. If an individual did not file with the DHR, he/she can sue directly in state court under the HRL **within three years** of the alleged sexual harassment. An individual may not file with the DHR if they have already filed a HRL complaint in state court.

Complaining internally to the Library does not extend the time to file with DHR or in court. The one year or three years is counted from date of the most recent incident of harassment.

One does not need an attorney to file a complaint with DHR, and there is no cost to file with DHR.

The DHR will investigate the complaint and determine whether there is probable cause to believe that sexual harassment has occurred. Probable cause cases are forwarded to a public hearing before an administrative law judge. If sexual harassment is found after the hearing, DHR has the power to award relief, which varies but may include requiring the employer to take action to stop the harassment, or redress the damage caused, including paying of monetary damages, attorney's fees and civil fines.

The DHR's main office contact information is: NYS Division of Human Rights, One Fordham Plaza, Fourth Floor, Bronx, New York 10458. Telephone: (718) 741-8400 or visit: www.dhr.ny.gov.

One may contact DHR at (888) 392-3644 or visit dhr.ny.gov/complaint for more information concerning the filing of a complaint. The website has a complaint form that can be downloaded, filled out, notarized and mailed to DHR. The website also contains contact information for DHR's regional offices across New York State.

Civil Rights Act of 1964: The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces federal anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act (codified as 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.). An individual can file a complaint with the EEOC anytime within 300 days from the harassment. There is no cost to file a complaint with the EEOC. The EEOC

will investigate the complaint, and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred, at which point the EEOC will issue a Right to Sue letter permitting the individual to file a complaint in federal court.

The EEOC does not hold hearings or award relief, but may take other action including pursuing cases in federal court on behalf of complaining parties. Federal courts may award remedies if discrimination is found to have occurred.

An employee alleging discrimination at work can file a "Charge of Discrimination." The EEOC has district, area, and field offices where complaints can be filed. Contact with the EEOC may be made by calling 1-800-669-4000 (TTY: 1-800-669-6820), visiting their website at www.eeoc.gov or via email at info@eeoc.gov.

If an individual filed an administrative complaint with the DHR, the DHR will file the complaint with the EEOC to preserve the right to proceed in federal court.

Contact the Local Police Department: If the harassment involves unwanted physical touching, coerced physical confinement or coerced sex acts, the conduct may constitute a crime. Contact the local police department.

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training: The Library will provide interactive sexual harassment training that meets or exceeds New York State Standards.

Adopted: January 7, 2019