

WORKPLACE BULLYING

What is Workplace Bullying?

In many ways, it is similar to playground bullying; except that as adults it should no longer be an issue. It is aggressive behavior that should be personal contained, but for some reason is not. Bullying involves more than one incident of aggressive negative behavior. It is a repeated pattern of negative behavior that usually involves a bully with more power or the convincing appearance of more power. Some examples of bullying and is unacceptable behavior may include the following:

- spreading malicious rumors, or insulting someone (particularly on the grounds of age, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimization
- unfair treatment
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

Bullying is not necessarily face to face; it may be by written communications, visual images (for example embarrassing photographs of colleagues), electronic email, phone and automatic supervision methods –such as computer recording of downtime from work, or recording of telephone conversations.

The Rule

It is against Town policy for any individual to bully another. It is also against Town policy for any retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint.

Complaint

The Town has designated a Bullying Officer. The current Officer is **Julie A. Jacobson, Town Manager**. Julie can be reached at 102 Central Street, Auburn, Ma. 01501 and her telephone number is (508) 832-7718. If you would prefer, you may contact Debra Dubois, Human Resource Coordinator, who has been designated as the Alternate Bullying Officer. Debra can be reached at 104 Central Street, Auburn, Ma. 01501 and her telephone number is (508) 407-7631.

If any individual believes he or she has been subject to bullying, the individual should initiate a complaint by contacting Julie or Debra as soon as possible. The individual should be aware that the longer the period of time between the event giving rise to the complaint and the filing, the more difficult it will be for the Bullying Officer to reconstruct what occurred. The individual will be requested to write out his or her complaint to document the charge.

If an employee prefers to discuss a possible bullying problem with his or her supervisor, the employee may always do so, but employees do not have to go through the regular chain of supervision when reporting bullying and may go directly to the Bullying Officer.

Investigation

On receiving the complaint, the Bullying Officer or the Alternate Officer will promptly have a preliminary investigation made into the matter. If after the completion of this preliminary investigation it is determined that there is reasonable cause for finding a violation of this policy, the Town will notify the complainant and the charged employee of the finding orally. The charged employee will be requested to respond to the complaint. Additional investigation will be made to the extent appropriate in each case. This process will be confidential to the extent consistent with an effective investigation, subject to the business needs of the Town.

Decision

After the response of the charged individual has been made, and any further investigation which may be warranted has been carried out, the Town will make a final decision. If the Town finds that the allegations in the complaint have been established by the investigation, the Town will initiate discipline of the charged individual. Discipline will be appropriate to the offense and employees involved, and may include discharge.¹

The complainant will be notified of the disposition of the investigation.

¹ Employees of the Town that are members of a bargaining unit shall be subject to discipline in accordance with the terms of the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Workplace Bullying

I acknowledge receipt of Workplace Bullying from the Town, and I have read its contents.

Employee Signature

Witness

Employee Name (Print)

Date