



Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

PURPOSE

The State University of New York, State College of Optometry is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment free from threatening behavior, acts of violence, and harassment. The College will not tolerate violence, threatening behavior, or harassment of any type, from any source. It is the responsibility of all College employees, managers, and supervisors to create and maintain a work/learning environment free from threats and acts of violence.

POLICY

Statement

The persons covered by this policy are: employees of the SUNY State College of Optometry (the “College”), College faculty, independent contractors, vendors, and other visitors who have been retained by the College with respect to the business and/or operation of the College. Students (who are not also employees of the College) and their guests are not covered by this policy; acts of violence alleged to have been committed by students will be addressed via the policies and procedures relating to student conduct. However, this policy shall apply to students who also serve as employees of the College, during such times as they are acting in their capacity as employees.

Any and all forms of violence, threatening behavior, and/or harassment which involve or affect SUNY State College of Optometry employees or which occur on the College’s campus or its or in any off-campus location that could be considered an extension of the workplace (i.e., satellite clinics, official travel) are subject to this policy. This includes threatening behavior, violent actions, and harassment by College employees directed against supervisors, by supervisors against employees, by employees directed against other employees, by employees directed against students, or visitors and vendors, and by visitors or vendors directed against College employees or students.

The College will actively work to prevent and eliminate violence, threatening behavior, and harassment on campus. The College will respond promptly and decisively to violence, threatening behavior, and harassment on campus. This response may include termination of employees (in accordance with provisions of Collective Bargaining Agreements governing such action) and will include timely involvement of law enforcement agencies, when appropriate. The College’s response may also include removal of third party vendors from campus or termination of contracts with such vendors.

Engaging in violence, threatening behavior, and/or harassment has been and is considered a serious form of employee misconduct.

“Violence, Threatening Behavior, and Harassment” Defined

Violence, threatening behavior, and harassment include conduct against persons or property that is offensive, intimidating, hostile, injury-producing, and/or abusive.



General Examples of Prohibited Conduct

1. All threats or acts of violence occurring on the campus, regardless of the relationship between the College and the parties involved.
2. All threats or acts of violence not occurring on the campus but involving someone who is acting in the capacity of a representative of the College.
3. All threats or acts of violence not occurring on the campus but where the acts against a person can be linked to the person's association with the State College of Optometry.
4. All threats or acts of violence not occurring on campus involving an employee of the College if the threats or acts of violence affect the interests of the College, employees, and/or students (i.e. while on official travel).
5. Any threats or acts of violence resulting in the conviction of an employee or agent of the College, or of an individual performing services on the College's behalf on a contract or temporary basis, under any criminal code provision relating to threats or acts of violence that adversely affect the legitimate interests and goals of the College.
6. Any form of retaliation against any employee or student who complains about threatening behavior, violence, or harassment.

Specific Examples of Prohibited Conduct

- A. No person may engage in violent conduct or make threats of violence, implied or direct, on University property or in connection with University business. This includes but is not limited to:
 1. The use of force with the intent to cause harm, e.g. physical attacks, any unwanted contact such as hitting, fighting, pushing, or throwing objects;
 2. Behavior that diminishes the dignity of others through sexual, racial, sexual, religious or ethnic harassment;
 3. Acts or threats which are intended to intimidate, harass, threaten, bully, coerce, or cause fear of harm whether directly or indirectly;
 4. Acts or threats made directly or indirectly by oral or written words, gestures or symbols that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical or mental harm.
- B. No person, without legal authority, may carry, possess or use any dangerous weapon on University property or in University buildings or facilities.

Application of Zero Tolerance for Violence Policy

1. The College's prohibition against threatening behavior, acts of violence, and harassment applies to all persons involved in the operation of the College, including but not limited to all College employees, third party vendors, and anyone else on campus.
2. Violations of this policy will be treated seriously by the College. Reports of such acts will be promptly investigated and action will be taken, as necessary, to appropriately address each incident. The College will seek severe disciplinary penalties, up to and



- including termination, against employees of the College who are involved in the commission of threatening behavior, violence, bullying and/or harassment.
3. The College is committed to quickly dealing with threatening behavior, violence, and harassment. Managers and supervisors are specifically empowered by this policy to take immediate action to resolve or stabilize violent situations on campus and to protect people from harm. They will ensure that, when a threat is made or a violent incident occurs, appropriate personnel, University Police and/or the Director of Human Resources, are immediately notified.
 4. The College is further committed to supporting the continuation of a good working relationship with University Police and local law enforcement, employing legal remedies that address issues of workplace violence (i.e., restraining orders), and creating and maintaining the highest practical level of physical security on campus.
 5. The College will promulgate this policy and other related informational documents to the campus community at least once each academic year to raise awareness and help prevent violence on campus. At a minimum, the promulgated materials will address:
 - ◆ The warning signs of violence
 - ◆ Appropriate responses to threatening, aggressive, harassing and violent behavior
 - ◆ Conflict resolution techniques
 6. The College may support criminal prosecution of those who threaten or commit violence or engage in harassment against its employees, students, and visitors to its campus.
 7. The Campus Safety Committee, chaired by a member of the committee, will continue to inspect the campus and will make recommendations for changes if it notices locations, procedures or services that could be catalysts for the occurrence of violent acts.

Employee Obligations

All potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately. If an employee, student, or visitor believes he/she or others are in immediate danger they should contact University Police as quickly as possible by calling University Police at extension 5555).

Reports of violence, threatening behavior, and/or harassment should be submitted in writing (using the Workplace Harassment Complaint Form) to any of the following persons:

- Immediate supervisor
- Department Head (if the report cannot be made to the immediate supervisor)
- Director of Human Resources or Senior Associate for Human Resources
- University Police (first contact if there is imminent danger)

Each person to whom such a report is made shall immediately forward the report to the Director of Human Resources.

Retaliation

Retaliatory action against anyone acting in good faith who has made a complaint of workplace violence, who has reported witnessing workplace violence, or who has been involved in reporting,



investigating, or responding to workplace violence is a violation of this policy. Those found responsible for retaliatory action will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The Warning Signs of Violence

Verbal

- Talking about weapons
- Using an angry or threatening tone
- Shouting, screaming, cursing
- Making threats or sexual comments
- Challenging rules or authority
- Making unreasonable demands
- Talking irrationally

Physical Signs

- Having a weapon
- Nervous pacing, restlessness
- Clenching fists or jaw, tightly gripping objects
- Violent gestures, including pounding on or breaking objects
- Angry looks or staring
- Staggering, slurred speech

The assistance of all members of the campus community in making the State College of Optometry a safe working, and learning environment is greatly appreciated.