

Harassment Prevention Policies for Easton Library

All Unlawful Harassment Prohibited

Easton Library strictly prohibits and does not tolerate unlawful harassment against employees or any other covered persons [including volunteers] because of race, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex (including pregnancy), gender (including gender nonconformity and status as a transgender or transsexual individual), age (40 and over), physical or mental disability, citizenship, genetic information, past, current or prospective service in the uniformed services, marital status or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state or local law.

Examples of Types of Harassment

Such harassment often includes harassment that is:

- ❖ Verbal (for example, epithets, derogatory statements, slurs, derogatory comments or jokes).
- ❖ Physical (for example, assault or inappropriate physical contact).
- ❖ Visual (for example, displaying derogatory posters, cartoons, drawings or making derogatory gestures).

This list is illustrative only, and not exhaustive. No form of harassment will be tolerated.

- ❖ Harassment is prohibited both at the workplace and at employer-sponsored events.

Sexual Harassment Policy Introduction

The Easton Library is committed to maintaining a workplace free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of workplace discrimination. The Easton Library has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment, and all employees are required to work in a manner that prevents sexual harassment in the workplace. This policy is one component of the Easton Library's commitment to a discrimination-free work environment.

Sexual harassment is against the law. All employees have legal right to a workplace free from sexual harassment, and employees can enforce this right by filing a complaint internally with the Easton Library, or with a government agency or in court under federal, state or local antidiscrimination laws.

Policy:

- ❖ The Easton Library policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment, interns, whether paid or unpaid, contractors and persons conducting business with the Easton Library.
 - ❖ 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, up to and including termination.
 - ❖ Retaliation Prohibition: No person covered by this Policy shall be subjected to adverse employment action including being discharged, disciplined, discriminated against, or otherwise subject to adverse employment action because the employee reports and incident of sexual harassment, provides information, or otherwise assists in any investigation of a sexual harassment complaint. The Easton Library has a zero-tolerance policy for such retaliation against anyone who, in good faith complains or provides information about suspected sexual harassment. Any employee of the Easton Library who retaliates against anyone involved in a sexual harassment investigation will be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Any employee, paid or unpaid intern, or non-employee¹ working in the workplace who believes they have been subjected to such retaliation should inform the Library Director. Additionally, such persons may also seek compensation in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.
 - ❖ Sexual harassment is offensive, is a violation of our policies, is unlawful, and subjects the Easton Library to liability for harm to victims of sexual harassment. Harassers may also be individually subjected to liability.
 - ❖ The Easton Library will conduct a prompt, thorough and confidential investigation that ensures due process for all parties, whenever management receives a complaint about sexual harassment, or otherwise knows of possible sexual harassment occurring. Effective corrective action will be taken whenever sexual harassment is found to have occurred. All employees, including the director, are required to cooperate with any internal investigation of sexual harassment.
 - ❖ All employees are encouraged to report any harassment or behaviors that violate this policy. The Easton Library will provide all employees a complaint form which allows for report of harassment and file complaints.
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- ❖ This policy applies to all employees, paid or unpaid interns, and non-employees and all must follow and uphold this policy. This policy must be posted prominently in all work locations and be provided to employees upon hiring.

What is “Sexual Harassment”?

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law. Sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, 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 complaining 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 used as the basis for employment decisions affecting an individual's employment

A sexually harassing hostile work environment consists of 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 made by someone which are offensive or objectionable to the recipient, which cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation, which interfere with the recipient's job performance.

Sexual harassment also occurs when a person in authority tries to trade job benefits for sexual favors. This can include hiring, promotion, continued employment or any other terms, conditions or privileges of employment. This is also called “quid pro quo” harassment.

Any employee who feels harassed should complain so that any violation of this policy can be corrected promptly. Any harassing conduct, even a single incident, can be addressed under this policy.

Examples of Sexual Harassment

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

- ❖ Physical assaults of a sexual nature;
 - Touching, pinching, patting, 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;
 - Requests for sexual favors accompanied by implies or overt threats concerning the victim's job performance evaluation, a promotion or other job benefits or detriments
 - Subtle or obvious pressure for unwelcomed sexual activities
- ❖ Sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience, which create a hostile work environment
- ❖ Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the workplace;
 - Displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional material, reading materials or other materials that are sexually demeaning or pornographic. This includes such 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 and the status of being transgender;
 - Interfering with, destroying or damaging a person's workstation, tools or equipment, or otherwise interfering with the individual's ability to perform the job
 - Sabotaging an individual's work
 - Bullying, yelling, name-calling

Who Can Be a Target of Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment can occur between any individuals, regardless of their sex or gender. New York Law protects employees, paid or unpaid interns, and non-employees, including independent contractors, and those employees by companies contracting to provide services in the workplace. A perpetrator of sexual harassment can be a superior, a subordinate, a coworker or anyone in the workplace including an independent contractor, contract worker, vendor, client, customer or visitor.

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 or not during work hours.

What is “Retaliation”?

Unlawful retaliation can be any action that would keep 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.

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

- ❖ Filed a complaint of sexual harassment, either internally or with anti-discrimination agency
- ❖ Testified or assisted in proceeding involving sexual harassment under the Human Rights Law or other anti-discrimination law
- ❖ Opposed sexual harassment by making verbal or informal complaint to management, or by simply informing a supervisor or manager of harassment
- ❖ Complained that another employee has been sexually harassed
- ❖ Encouraged a fellow employee to report harassment

Reporting Sexual Harassment

Preventing sexual harassment is everyone’s responsibility. The Easton Library cannot prevent or remedy sexual harassment unless they know about it. Any employee, paid or unpaid intern or non-employee who has been subjected to behavior that may constitute sexual harassment is encouraged to report such behavior to the director or Easton Library Board of Trustees. Anyone who witnesses or becomes aware of potential instances of sexual harassment should report such behavior to the director.

Reports of sexual harassment may be made verbally or in writing. A form for submission of a written complaint is attached to this Policy, and 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, paid or unpaid interns or non-employees who believe they have been a victim of sexual harassment may also seek assistance in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.

Supervisory Responsibilities

All employees who receive a complaint or information about 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 Easton Library Director or Easton Library Board of Trustees.

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

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

Complaint and Investigation of Sexual Harassment Procedure

All complaints or information about suspected sexual harassment will be investigated by the Easton Library Director or the Easton Library Board of Trustees, 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 possible.

An investigation of any complaint, information or knowledge of suspected sexual harassment will be prompt and thorough, and should be completed within 30 days. The investigation will be confidential to the extent possible. All persons involved, including complainants, witnesses and alleged perpetrators will be accorded due process 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. Employees who participate in any investigation will not be retaliated against

Investigations will be done in accordance with the following steps:

- ❖ Upon receipt of complaint, the Easton Library Director or Board of Trustees will conduct an immediate review of the allegations, and take any interim actions, as appropriate. If complaint is oral, encourage the individual to complete the "Complaint Form" in writing. If he or she refuses, prepare the Complaint Form based on the oral reporting
- ❖ If documents, emails or phone records are relevant to the allegations, 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 a letter, memo or email), 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 final resolution of the complaint, together with any corrective action (s).
- ❖ Keep the written documentation and associated documents in the employer's records
- ❖ Promptly notify the individual who complained and the individual(s) who responded of the final determination and implement any corrective actions identified in the written document. Inform the individual who complained of their right to file a complaint or charge externally as outlined below.

Legal Protections and External Remedies

Sexual harassment is not only prohibited by the Easton Library but is also prohibited by state, federal, and, where applicable, local law.

Aside from the internal process at the Easton Library, employees may also choose to pursue legal remedies with the following government entities **at any time**.

New York State Division of Human Rights

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

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

Complaining internally to the Easton Library does not extend your 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.

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

DHR will investigate your complaint and determine whether there is a probable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred. Probable cause causes are forwarded to a public hearing before an administrative law judge. If discrimination is found after a hearing, DHR has the power

to award relief, which varies but may include requiring your employer to take action to stop the harassment, or regardless the damage caused, including paying monetary damages, attorney's fees and civil fines.

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

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

United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

The EEOC enforced 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 a 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 causes in federal court on behalf of complaining parties. Federal courts may award remedies of discrimination is found to have occurred.

If an employee believes that he/she has been discriminated against at work, he/she can file a "Charge of Discrimination." The EEOC has distinct, area, and field offices where complaints can be filed. Contact the EEOC by calling 1-800-669-4000 (1-800-669-6829 (TTY)), visiting their website at www.eeoc.gov or via email at info@eeoc.gov

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

Local Protection

Many localities enforce laws protecting individuals from sexual harassment and discrimination. An individual should contact the county, city or town in which they live to find out if such laws exist. For example, employees who work in New York City may file complaints of sexual harassment with the New York City Commission on Human Rights. Contact their main office at Law Enforcement Bureau of the NYC Commission on Human Rights, 40 Rector Street, 10th Floor, New York, New York; call 311 or (212) 306-7450; or visit www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/html/home.shtml

Contact the Local Police Department

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