

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

Garrett-Keyser-Butler Community Head Start and Early Head Start Program reserves the right to change the content of this policy with or without notice. This document is not intended to create contractual obligations. It should also be noted that changes in the written policy may lag behind changes in applicable laws, in which case the law would supercede the policy.

PURPOSE

GKB Head Start and Early Head Start Program strives to maintain a safe, professional and harassment free work environment and requires the highest standard of personal conduct of its employees, vendors, clients and any persons associated with the agency or on agency property. In keeping with this standard, threats of and/or acts of violence in the workplace - forms of employee misconduct - are strictly forbidden. Consistent with GKB Head Start and Early Head Start Program's commitment against threats of and/or acts of violence in the workplace, the agency has adopted a specific policy regarding violence in the workplace and procedures for handling the situations.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of GKB Head Start and Early Head Start Program and their family members, affiliates and non-employees, defined herein to mean consultants, guests, clients, vendors and service providers.

DEFINITIONS

GKB Head Start and Early Head Start Program has zero tolerance for threats of and/or acts of violence. Without exception, threats of and/or acts of violence are not permitted. All such threats and acts, even those made in apparent jest, will be taken seriously and will lead to discipline. A threat includes, but is not limited to, any intent to harm a person or damage agency property. Threats may be indirect or direct, and may be communicated verbally or nonverbally.

The possession of non-work related weapons on agency premises and at agency sponsored events shall constitute a threat of violence.

Under Indiana Code the definition of violence includes battery and/or stalking. Stalking is a continuing or repeated harassment of another person that would cause the person to feel frightened, intimidated or threatened. This can include following an employee to or from the employee's place of work, entering the employee's place of work, following the employee during hours of employment, making telephone calls to an employee during the employee's hours of employment and sending correspondence to an employee by such means as private mail, inter office mail, fax, or electronic mail.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Each employee is responsible for:

- Maintaining a safe, professional and harassment free working environment.
- Reporting any threat of and/or act of violence in the workplace in accordance with the procedures listed below.
- Cooperating in the agency's investigation of threats of and/or act of violence in the workplace.

Each manager and supervisor is responsible for:

- Communication of applicable policies (Workplace Violence Policy, Drug-Free Workplace Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, etc.), procedures and processes to ensure a safe, professional and harassment free working environment.
- Understanding the spectrum of unacceptable behaviors which may constitute employee misconduct.
- Fostering a culture which promotes compliance with agency policies and which prohibits reprisals
- Listening receptively to employee complaints and taking appropriate next steps.
- Cooperating in the agency's investigation of threats of and/or acts of violence in the workplace.

PROCEDURES

Employees who believe they have been the target of or are witness to threats of and/or acts of violence and or harassment should report the incident or conduct immediately to his or her supervisor. The incident or conduct must be documented in writing and submitted to the Director. To the extent possible, the confidentiality of the individuals submitting or named by the complaint shall be maintained.

After a complaint is received by the Director, an investigation will take place which may include interviews with the complainant and the accused. All documents and any other relevant information will be considered. All allegations of violence, threats of violence or harassment will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The investigation will be commenced and completed as quickly as possible.

A petition to prohibit workplace violence requesting a Workplace Violence Restraining Order (WVRO) may be filed with the DeKalb County courts if an employee is the target of unlawful violence or a credible threat of violence.

If a crisis occurs or an intruder becomes volatile, the following steps should occur:

1. Remove self from harm. If the situation is in the presence of children, remove the children from harm.
2. Warn others. Depending upon the situation, the Crisis Response Team will respond to the location.
3. Notify law enforcement. If a WVRO exists, it is important to have the Case Number to give to the law enforcement officers.
4. Notify supervisor and Director.

REMINDER: Only the Director will work with designated law enforcement spokesperson and the media. Student and staff names are NOT to be released to the media. All staff are to direct the media to the Director.

Safety in Hostile Intruder Situations:

- If possible, contact the Main Office via phone or messenger
- Stay calm and calm children and/or clients
- Do exactly as instructed by the intruder
- Take no actions that jeopardize personnel safety or the safety of others
- If a weapon is displayed, assume that the intruder will use it if instructions are not followed
- Avoid sudden movements
- Observe physical characteristics of intruder including clothing and identifying marks
- Notify authorities as soon as the intruder has left
- If a crime has been committed, restrict entry to protect the crime scene
- Ask witnesses to remain
- Document, in writing, any information about the event

Building/Property Safety Plans will be developed as needed depending upon the situation but may include:

- Locking doors, limiting access to the facility
- No employees being left alone
- Altering bus routes and driver assignments
- Utilization of additional lighting
- Visible deterrents (i.e. signs, cameras, security guards, etc.)
- Additional emergency procedures

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

After a full investigation, appropriate corrective action will be taken up to and including termination. Response options may include supervisor counseling, employee relations counseling, fitness for duty evaluation, written warning, suspension or termination. The incident may also be referred to the appropriate local authorities. Perpetrators may be subject to arrest, criminal prosecution and/or civil litigation as a result of violation of this policy.

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