



VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

I. Policy Statement

Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) is committed to provide a workplace that is free from violence or the threat of violence by establishing preventative measures, by holding perpetrators of violence accountable, and by providing assistance and support to victims. A threat assessment team has been established to provide assessment and intervention of troubling, disruptive, and threatening behavior in an effort to avert activity that compromises the retention of a safe and secure environment for the campus community.

Any form of violence as defined in this policy may be cause for criminal prosecution or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, as unacceptable personal conduct. WSSU will apply all useful management tools to accomplish the dual purpose of reducing the effects of violence on victims and the WSSU community as well as hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their actions.

II. Definitions

The following list contains definitions of prohibited actions and behaviors. This list is not exhaustive and employees are encouraged to report all acts or threats of violence even if not listed below:

1. **Workplace violence** includes, but is not limited to: intimidation, bullying, stalking, threats, physical attack, property damage, or domestic and family violence. This includes acts of violence committed by or against University employees. Such incidents may also involve students, clients, visitors or vendors.
2. **Bullying** is unwanted offensive and malicious behavior that undermines an individual or group through persistently negative attacks. The behavior generally includes an element of vindictiveness, and is intended to undermine, patronize, humiliate, intimidate or demean the recipient.
3. **Intimidation** includes but is not limited to unwarranted behavior intended to frighten, coerce, or induce duress.
4. **Physical attack** is unwanted or hostile physical contact including but not limited to hitting, fighting, shoving, restraining, or throwing objects.
5. **Property damage** is intentional damage to property and includes property owned by WSSU or by employees, students, clients, visitors or vendors.
6. **Stalking** involves harassing or pestering an individual in person, in writing, by telephone or by electronic format. Stalking also involves following an individual,

- spying on them, alarming the recipient, or causing them distress and may involve physical violence or the fear of physical violence.
7. **Threat** is the expression of intent to cause physical or mental harm. An expression constitutes a threat without regard to whether the party communicating the threat has the present ability to carry out the threat and without regard to whether the expression is contingent, conditional, or future.
 8. **Domestic, Dating, and Family Violence** is the use of abusive or violent behavior, including threats and intimidation, between people who have an ongoing or a prior intimate relationship (including people who are married, live together or date, or who have been married, lived together or dated) or between family members.

III. Guidelines

Prohibited Actions

It is a violation of this policy to:

1. engage or threaten to engage in workplace violence as defined by this policy;
2. possess, use, or threaten to use a weapon. Weapons are any objects that may be used to intimidate, attack, or injure another person or to damage property. Objects understood to have a primary function as a weapon are not allowed on campus unless expressly authorized under this policy or under State law;
3. use authority vested to any employee of WSSU in such a way that it violates this policy;
4. violate any state or federal law or policy regarding workplace violence and;
5. engage in off-duty violent conduct that has a potential adverse impact on WSSU and its employees, students, clients, visitors, or vendors. An act of off-duty violent conduct may be covered by this policy and may also be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. In these situations, WSSU shall demonstrate that the disciplinary action is necessary due to a significant correlation between the type of violent conduct committed and the potential adverse impact on WSSU and its employees, students, clients, visitors, and vendors.

Prohibition on Retaliation

This policy prohibits retaliation against any student, faculty, or staff who, in good faith, reports a violation of this policy. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the safety and anonymity of anyone who comes forward with concerns about a threat or act of violence. Furthermore, all reports of violence will be handled in a confidential manner, with information released on a need-to-know basis.

IV. Roles & Responsibilities

All employees are encouraged to be alert to the possibility of violence on the part of employees, former employees, students, clients, visitors or vendors and should report all acts or threats of violence to supervisors, Human Resources, Campus Police, or through other University-approved methods of reporting violence.

Employee Threat Assessment Team

The Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that WSSU has a threat assessment team that will assess and respond to immediate and potential acts of workplace violence. The threat assessment team shall be comprised of representatives from Human Resources, Police & Public Safety, Academic Affairs, University Counseling Center, and Office of Legal Affairs. The team will be responsible for receiving and assessing reports of workplace violence, determining the seriousness and/or dangerousness of the reports, advising University administrators on possible intervention measures or resolutions, and conducting related training. The threat assessment team shall not have authority to issue or recommend any disciplinary actions.

V. Applicability

This policy applies to all employees of WSSU, regardless of appointment type.

VI. Compliance

False Reporting

Deliberately false or misleading reports of violence that appear to have been filed with the intention to harass or that appear to be frivolous or an abuse of the violence reporting process shall be considered instances of unacceptable personal conduct and may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or criminal prosecution.

Elwood L. Robinson, Ph.D.
Chancellor

Responsible Division: Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff

Authority: Chancellor

History: Adopted: March 6, 2017