

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY AND MEDICAL CENTER

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: WORK PLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

Policy # HR-027

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2001

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to set forth Vanderbilt's desire to create and maintain an environment free from disruptive, threatening, and violent behavior. Vanderbilt will not tolerate inappropriate or intimidating behavior within the work place (see examples in I. A. below).

PROCEDURE

The University will respond appropriately to every reported incidence of disruptive, threatening, or violent behavior.

I. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Examples of inappropriate behavior by staff members include but are not limited to:
 - Behavior that distracts, interferes with, or prevents normal work functions or activities. This behavior includes but is not limited to yelling, using profanity or vulgarity, verbally abusing others, making inappropriate demands for time and attention; making unreasonable demands for action (demanding an immediate appointment or a response to a complaint on the spot) or refusing a reasonable request for identification.
 - Behavior that includes physical actions short of actual contact/injury (e.g., moving closer aggressively), oral or written threats to a person or property, whether in person, over the telephone or through other means of communication. Reference should be given to the [Electronic Communications Policy #25](#).

- Behavior that includes physical assault, with or without weapons (1) ; behavior that a reasonable person would interpret as being violent, (e.g. throwing things, pounding on a desk or door, or destroying property); and specific threats to inflict physical harm.
 - Behavior which create incidents that are stressful or traumatic that interfere with an individual's or group of individuals' ability to effectively function in his/her educational or work environment.
- B. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) Teams: teams composed of mental health professionals and members of the Vanderbilt community trained in working with issues related to violence and the appropriate handling of on-going emergencies. (2)

II. **REPORTING:**

When appropriate, complaints under this policy may be reported to the Vanderbilt Police and Security Department, Employee Relations or the Opportunity Development Center. All reports or complaints under this policy will be investigated and include confidentiality where appropriate. Once an investigation is complete, a recommendation on how to handle the complaint will be submitted to the appropriate area for disposition. Some behaviors may also be prohibited under criminal law, and where appropriate, the University will report such cases to the proper authorities.

III. **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP):**

Counseling for staff may be available through the EAP for both the victim and any others within the Vanderbilt community affected by a violent or traumatic incident.

IV. **PROTECTIVE ORDERS:**

Members of the Vanderbilt community who have obtained a protective order (3) should supply a copy of the order to the Vanderbilt Police and Security Department. Other parties may also be informed when deemed necessary for the safety of the Vanderbilt community.

V. **DISCIPLINE/CORRECTIVE STEPS:**

Staff who violate this policy may be subject to discipline up to and

including discharge. Staff should refer to the Human Resources policies on Discharge or Performance Improvement Counseling for clarification.

VI. **GENERAL**

All members of the Vanderbilt community are responsible for maintaining a safe work environment and participating in investigations as necessary. Reasonable action will be taken to ensure that persons involved in an investigation, or in providing information during an investigation do not suffer any form of retaliation because of their good faith participation. Steps to avoid retaliation may include placing a party to the investigation on administrative leave or other reasonable action. Additional steps may be taken to address workplace safety issues.

1 Possessing an unauthorized weapon on campus is grounds for immediate termination. See [Discharge Policy HR Policy #15](#).

2 For CISD assistance please contact the Employee Assistance Program at 936-1327. This number answers 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

3 A protective order is issued by a judge/court.

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