



## CIVILITY IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

**Policy Title:** Civility in the Workplace Policy

**Policy Type:** Administrative

**Policy Number:** 10-16 (2025)

**Approved:** 7/30/2025

**Responsible Office:** Office of Human Resources

**Responsible Executive:** Vice President and Chief of Staff

**Applies to:** University Community

### POLICY STATEMENT

Norfolk State University (NSU) shall foster a culture that demonstrates the principle of civility and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the members of our campus. The University does not tolerate workplace harassment, bullying (including cyber-bullying), and acts of workplace violence of any kind committed by employees or third parties to the university. The Commonwealth's policy addressing civility and workplace violence can be found on the Department of Human Resource Management website at: [Civility in the Workplace](#).

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### DEFINITIONS

**Bullying:** Disrespectful, intimidating, aggressive and unwanted behavior toward a person that is intended to denigrate, marginalize, or harm them. These behaviors may also be intended to force a targeted person to do or not do something. The behavior may involve a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor and the targeted person. Bullying may also be severe, pervasive, or persistent, creating a hostile work environment.



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**Cyber-Bullying:** Using technology (i.e. internet, cell phones, emails, text messages, blogs, pictures, postings on social media, videos, etc.) to intentionally harm others through hostile behavior or threatening, disrespectful, demeaning, or intimidating communications. Cyber-bullying may also be demonstrated when a person Pretending to be the victim or spreading rumors or visual images online in order to denigrate or marginalize the targeted person.

**Please note the following with regard to Bullying and Cyberbullying:** Behaviors may be discriminatory if they are predicated on a person belonging to a protected class (e.g., using prejudicial stereotyping or references based on the targeted person's characteristics or affiliation with a group, class, or category to which that person belongs, or targeting people because they are in a protected class). Protected classes include the following: age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status, or any other bases under the law.

**Retaliation:** Overt or covert acts of reprisal, interference, restraint, penalty, discrimination, intimidation, or harassment against an individual or group exercising rights under this policy.

**Threat:** An expression of intent to cause physical harm. A threat can be verbal or nonverbal, communicated orally, in writing, through gestures or electronic transmission, or by any other means. It can be communicated indirectly or directly to an intended recipient.

**Third Parties:** Individuals who are not state employees, but have business interactions with state employees, such as contractors, relatives, acquaintances, or strangers.

**Workplace:** Any location, either permanent or temporary, where an employee performs any work-related duty. This includes, but is not limited to, the buildings and the surrounding perimeters, including the parking lots, field locations, alternate work locations, and travel to and from work assignments.

**Workplace Violence:** Any physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal abuse occurring in the workplace by employees or third parties. Threatening behaviors create a reasonable fear of injury to another person or damage to property or subject another individual to extreme emotional distress. Prohibited behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Injuring oneself or another physically
- Behavior that creates psychological trauma and/ or a reasonable fear of injury in another
- Harassment of any nature such as stalking, shouting or swearing
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a weapon that is not required for work while on state premises or conducting state business
- Intentionally damaging property
- Threatening to injure an individual or to damage property



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- Committing injurious acts motivated by or related to domestic violence or sexual harassment
- Retaliating against any employee who, in good faith, reports a violation of this policy
- Behavior that subjects another individual to extreme emotional distress.
- Bullying Behavior

Acts of violence occurring outside the workplace also may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or termination. In these situations, the agency must demonstrate that the violent conduct committed has an adverse impact on the employee's ability to perform his or her assigned duties and responsibilities or that it undermines the effectiveness of the university's activities.

### **CONTACT(S)**

The Office of Human Resources officially interprets this policy. The Vice President for Operations and Chief Strategist for Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by BOV Policy # 01 (2014) *Creating and Maintaining Policies* through the appropriate governance structures. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to The Office of Human Resources.

## **POLICY CONTENTS**

### **1. IMMINENT THREATS**

Any member of the university community who observes violent behavior or behavior believed to be an imminent threat of physical violence shall report it immediately to the NSU Police Department by calling 757-823-8102. When in doubt, report such observations to the NSU Police.

### **2. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING NON-IMMINENT THREATS**

#### **a. Non-Imminent Threats**

All members of the university community are encouraged to report any concerning behaviors that may pose a risk to the safety of the university community. Examples of such behavior include but are not limited to:

- Displays of disruptive conduct or troubling non-verbal communications
- References to violent, destructive, or harmful behavior
- Extreme and inappropriate reactions or responses
- Suicidal or homicidal comments or threats
- Unexplained and alarming changes in behavior or personal habits
- Any other hostile behavior or communication that causes or might cause legitimate fear for the physical safety others or the individual



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### **b. Reporting**

If you have concerns about an individual's behavior or situation, please contact one of the following, as appropriate under the circumstances:

- University Police: 757-823-8102
- Office of Human Resources: 757-823-8160
- Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs: 757-823-8141
- Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost: 757-823-8408
- Office of Access and Equal Opportunity: 757-823-8294

Individuals from these offices may bring the concern to the Threat Assessment Team.

### **c. Training**

The Office of Human Resources provides workplace violence prevention resources and information on how to report as part of every new employee orientation program.

Employees are provided a copy of the BOV #5 Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy, [DHRM's Policy 1.60, Standards of Conduct](#) and [DHRM's Policy 2.35, Civility in the Workplace](#)

Training will be provided on recognizing and responding to workplace violence and emergency situations and utilizing the Everbridge Notification System.

### **d. Support for Victims of Violence**

Victims of violent incidents in the workplace may contend with a variety of medical, psychological, and legal consequences. As needed and appropriate, the University can accommodate victims of workplace violence by:

- Referring victims to appropriate community resources, such as health care facilities, counseling services, victim advocacy groups, legal aid, and domestic violence shelters;
- Providing flexible work hours or short-term or extended leave;
- Cooperating with law enforcement personnel in the investigation of the crime and the prosecution of the offender. Providing a debriefing for employees as needed after a serious violent occurrence to explain what happened and what steps are being taken by the University to support affected employees.

### **e. Policy Violations and Enforcement**

Applicable laws and human resource policies will be used to respond to workplace violence.

Such policies may include disciplinary action under [DHRM's Policy 1.60, Standards of Conduct](#), [DHRM Policy 2.35, Civility in the Workplace](#), and/or Norfolk State University Handbooks (which may be found at the [NSU Office of the President Policy Library Handbooks webpage](#)) up to and including termination, based on the situation. Violent acts by employees occurring outside the workplace also may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal. Fit for Duty Testing may also be required.



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### **f. Retaliation**

Retaliation against any member of the campus community for reporting or having witnessed a threat of violence or concerning behavior is a violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary action. The university will address any retaliation brought to its attention.

## **EDUCATION AND COMPLIANCE**

The Office of Human Resources shall make available to all employees the requirements of this policy. The policy will be listed on the Office of Human Resources' website and on the University's policy webpage. To ensure conformity to the requirements of this policy, the Office of Human Resources will distribute annual reminders via Campus Announcements. Violations will be reported to the Office of Human Resources immediately upon disclosure or revelations.

## **PUBLICATION**

The policy will be published on the Policy Library's webpage.

## **REVIEW SCHEDULE**

- Next Scheduled Review: January 2028
- Approval by, date: President/Cabinet, July 30,, 2025
- Supersedes: Administrative Policy 47-03 (2014) Campus and Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- DHRM Policy 1.60 Standards of Conduct: [https://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/docs/default-source/hrpolicy/pol1\\_60.pdf](https://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/docs/default-source/hrpolicy/pol1_60.pdf)
- DHRM Policy 2.35 Civility in the Workplace: [www.dhrm.virginia.gov/docs/default-source/hrpolicy/policy-2-35-civility-in-the-workplace-policy.pdf](http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/docs/default-source/hrpolicy/policy-2-35-civility-in-the-workplace-policy.pdf)
- Code of Virginia 23.1-805 Violence Prevention Committee and Threat Assessment Team: <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title23.1/chapter8/section23.1-805/>

## **FORMS**

There are no forms associated with this policy.