



# Harassment Prevention Policy and Complaint Procedure

*Adopted 09.27.2022*

*Updated 03.24.2026*

## **I. Introduction and Statement of Policy**

The Mystic & Noank Library is committed to providing a work environment in which all people are treated with respect and dignity, and that is free of any form of harassment in the workplace. As an example of the importance we place on this commitment, the Library's full Harassment Prevention Policy, including the complaint procedure, is shared below.

The Mystic & Noank Library strictly prohibits harassment and any other form of discrimination, including but not limited to harassment based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, sex (gender), sexual orientation, transgender expression or identity, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, religion, age, disability, past or present service in the uniformed services of the United States, genetic makeup, or any other legally protected basis. The Library also prohibits discrimination or harassment against any individual based upon that individual's association with an individual in a protected class. In addition, the Library prohibits any form of harassment against any employee or applicant for employment, or by an employee against anyone, including anyone with whom we do business, residents or visitors, regardless of whether the victim is a member of a protected class.

All supervisors and employees must strive to maintain a work environment free from discrimination, harassment and intimidation. The Library will investigate all complaints of discrimination or harassment and preserve confidentiality to the maximum extent feasible. Any employee who violates this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

## **II. Non-Retaliation**

Employees and applicants for employment will not be subjected to any retaliation or adverse consequences because they have (a) filed a legitimate complaint of discrimination or harassment; (b) assisted or participated in an investigation of such a complaint, or in any hearing or legal proceeding involving such a complaint; (c) opposed any unlawful conduct involving discrimination or harassment; or (d) exercised any other legal right protected by law that involves discrimination or harassment.

## **III. Prohibited Forms of Harassment**

Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive, or abusive working environment. Some examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Making racial or ethnic slurs;
- Ridiculing, insulting or demeaning a person, a group of people, or their relatives, friends or associates based upon one or more of their race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or religion.
- Subjecting an individual to conduct that constitutes bullying.

Sexual harassment is verbal or physical conduct or abuse of a sexual nature, unwelcome sexual advances, and/or requests for sexual favors in situations where:

- Submission to such conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment;
- An individual's submission to or rejection of such conduct becomes the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexually harassing conduct may be overt or subtle. Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Repeatedly e-mailing, text-messaging, calling, or otherwise attempting to contact another employee to solicit a non-professional relationship with the individual;
- Basing any employment decision on an employee's or applicant's acceptance or rejection of personal relations or sexual advances;
- Verbal conduct, such as suggestive or offensive comments, sexual jokes, or sexual propositions;
- Showing or sharing sexually explicit images, pictures, cartoons, or tattoos;
- Nonverbal conducts such as leers or stares; and
- Unwanted physical conduct, such as making inappropriate physical touching.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex (gender) discrimination, and can occur against an individual of any gender or gender identity by another employee of any gender or gender identity. It can be directed against an employee or a supervisor by another employee or supervisor. It also can be directed against an employee by a library patron, visitor, or anyone with whom we do business, and vice versa.

This policy also applies to the Library's electronic communications systems. Employees may not use any Library communications systems to harass others.

#### **IV. Complaint Procedure and Investigation**

Any employee who believes they have been subjected to any type of discrimination, harassment or bullying should immediately tell the other person to stop or make it clear that the conduct is not welcome or acceptable. In addition, the employee should immediately inform his or her

supervisor of the perceived discrimination, harassment, or bullying. The supervisor will complete an incident report to ensure a written record of the report and the subsequent action. This reporting process and action will provide the best opportunity to prevent further discrimination, harassment, or bullying and will allow prompt effective corrective measures.

In the event that any employee feels uncomfortable, for any reason, with discussing the matter with their supervisor, the employee should contact either the Executive Director or Assistant Director directly. If the matter involves either the Executive Director or Assistant Director, the employee should contact either the Executive Director or Assistant Director, whoever is the individual who has not created the incident. The individual who receives the report will in turn contact the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees to ensure an appropriate investigation.

## **V. Harassment Prevention Training**

All new employees are required to participate in sexual harassment training in accordance with Connecticut law, which requires two (2) hours of interactive training within the first six (6) months after the employee's date of hire. Existing employees also must receive periodic supplemental sexual harassment prevention training once every five (5) years.

For the list of practices, refer to the Procedure Manual.