

Pinellas County Anti-Harassment Policy

1. General:

It is the policy of Pinellas County to maintain a work environment free from verbal or physical conduct that unreasonably harasses, disturbs, or interferes with an employee's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment based on one's race, color, national origin, religion, gender (including gender identity or gender expression and sexual harassment), sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, age, political affiliation, military status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law.

This policy prohibits harassment that impacts the workplace, no matter where or in what medium or forum it occurs.

Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

- (1) unwanted physical contact or offensive conduct of a sexual nature, including flirtations, advances, or propositions;
- (2) verbal harassment about an individual's gender or sexual interest, sexual innuendos, and offensive jokes or descriptions of personal sexual conduct;
- (3) demeaning, degrading, or insulting comments about a person's physical appearance or any characteristic enumerated above;
- (4) displaying photos or other media which are demeaning, insulting, intimidating, or sexually suggestive; and
- (5) demeaning, insulting, sexually suggestive, or otherwise offensive written, recorded, or electronically transmitted messages.

2. Reporting:

a. An employee who believes they are subjected to conduct prohibited by this policy must report such conduct as soon as possible to the Office of Human Rights (OHR) at 727-464-4880. OHR will notify the Appointing Authority and appropriate Board Chair or Vice Chair if necessary (though no discipline shall be imposed for failure to do so).

b. If a supervisor or manager becomes aware that harassment or discrimination is occurring, either from personal observations or as a result of an employee coming forward, the supervisor or manager must immediately report it to OHR.

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3. **Investigation and Discipline:**

- a. Allegations shall be treated seriously, and investigated promptly by OHR.
- b. Employees also remain free to report such activity to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or Florida Commission on Human Relations.
- c. Once OHR commences an investigation under this policy, they will work with the Appointing Authority to assure the complainant and alleged harasser interact only to the extent that business necessity dictates if complete separation of the parties during the pendency of any investigation proves impractical. However, no adverse action will be taken against a complaining employee in order to accomplish this separation.
- d. In the event an Appointing Authority who reports to a Board has been accused of harassment, OHR shall consult with the Chair of said Board to determine how best to accomplish separation during the pendency of the investigation.
- e. Allegations against a Commissioner, Constitutional Officer, or anyone in OHR shall be forwarded by OHR to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or Florida Commission on Human Relations for investigation.
- f. To ensure fairness to all parties, an investigation will be conducted in a confidential manner and include the taking of oral and written statements from all parties involved and any witnesses. Any alleged harasser will be provided the opportunity to respond to allegations of harassment.
- g. Any refusal by an employee to participate in an investigation initiated under this policy by the designated County official, after being advised that statements made and evidence gathered as a result are not admissible in a criminal proceeding, shall be considered a violation of this policy and Unified Personnel System Rule 6. There shall be no retaliation for participating in an investigation of alleged harassment.
- h. Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination.