

# TOWN OF MANCHESTER, CONNECTICUT



**To:** ALL TOWN EMPLOYEES  
**From:** Steve Stephanou, Town Manager  
**Subject:** Policy on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace  
**Date:** September 8, 2023

It is the policy of the Town of Manchester that sexual harassment in the workplace is prohibited, illegal, and will not be tolerated. Federal and state law, including Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000e-2(a)(1), and the Connecticut General Statutes 46a-60 et seq., (8) prohibit various forms of discrimination and illegal harassment in employment and the workplace. All employees, managers, and non-supervisors as well as vendors, clients, and customers alike must comply with this policy and are expected to avoid any behavior or conduct that could be interpreted as sexual harassment. In addition, employees and the like are responsible for ensuring that such conduct does not occur either within the workplace, at assignments outside the workplace, or at Town-sponsored events. Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken against any employee who violates this policy. Sexual harassment is illegal and prohibited.

Sexual harassment means: "Any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (1) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- (2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- (3) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment." Individuals who engage in acts of sexual harassment may be subject to civil and criminal penalties.

Sexual harassment refers to behavior that is unwelcome, is personally offensive, that debilitates morale, and therefore interferes with work effectiveness. Thus, no employee or anyone should be subjected to unsolicited and unwelcomed sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical, or led to believe that an employment opportunity or benefit will in any way depend upon "cooperation" of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment may include such conduct, but is not limited to the following a) verbal conduct such as sexual innuendoes, “kidding”, “testing”, jokes of a sexual nature, suggestive or offensive comments, lewd remarks, continued or repeated verbal abuse of sexual nature and sexual propositions, b) non-verbal conduct such as derogatory or pornographic displays, cartoons or drawings, sexual gestures, repeated offensive sexual flirtations, or leers or stares, c) physical conducts such as touching, kissing, patting, pinching, brushing up against someone, demands for sexual favors, assault, or retaliation for complaining about sexual harassment. Sexual harassment conduct generally is repetitious and persistent in nature towards another person. Sexual harassment does not refer to the occasional, socially acceptable compliment.

In order to promote mutual respect in the workplace and to prevent sexual discrimination in employment, state and federal laws have been developed which outline unacceptable workplace behavior.

Examples of conduct, which may constitute sexual harassment, are:

- Unwelcome remarks to a fellow employee about their physical anatomy, attractiveness, or appearance;
- Touching co-workers by putting your hands, arms, legs, etc., on any part of another employee’s body;
- Telling jokes or making suggestive, lewd, or offensive statements which degrade people; placing or condoning sexually suggestive objectives or pictures in the workplace which may embarrass or offend others;
- Asking an employee to participate in any activity of a sexual nature; for example, repeatedly asking an employee for a date after having been refused the first time;
- Openly or implicitly threatening an employee’s job security, job conditions, wages or benefits if he or she does not agree to engage in behavior of a sexual nature with you;
- Encouraging, condoning or participating in any of the above activities or behaviors.

If any of these activities or more severe incidents of sexual harassment occur in your office, contact the Human Resources Department, your Supervisor, Department Head, or the Town Manager immediately. The Town of Manchester reminds all employees that acts of sexual harassment by employees, supervisors, or managers will not be tolerated.

The Town of Manchester will not tolerate any retaliation against any employee who files a complaint in good faith and or participates as a witness. If a complaint is found to have merit, the employee may face discipline, up to and including termination. However, the Town of Manchester also recognizes that false accusations of sexual harassment or their unlawful conduct can be damaging to an accused employee or person and disruptive to the department operations; knowingly making false accusations may constitute misconduct for which disciplinary action may be imposed.