



# Town of Sudbury

## Discriminatory Harassment Policy and Procedures

(rev. 5-20-26)

### I. Introduction

It is the goal of the **Town of Sudbury** to promote a workplace that is free of discriminatory harassment (“harassment”) of any type, including sexual harassment. Discriminatory harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on a characteristic protected by law, such as sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, military service, arrest record or gender identity. The **Town of Sudbury** will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects employment conditions, that interferes unreasonably with an individual’s performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Harassment of employees occurring in the workplace, in connection with work-related travel, and/or work-sponsored events will not be tolerated. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Because the **Town of Sudbury** takes allegations of harassment seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of harassment. Where it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting a workplace that is free of harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of harassment.

### II. Definitions

“Harassment” means unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on a characteristic protected by law. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Display or circulation of written materials or pictures that shows hostility or aversion to a person’s sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, military service, arrest record or gender identity.
2. Verbal abuse, slurs, derogatory comments, or insults about, directed at, or made in the presence of an individual or group as previously described.
3. Denying employment opportunities because of such characteristics or because of association with someone of a particular sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, military service, arrest record or gender identity.
4. Putting down or mocking a culture or language.

“Sexual harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical 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 unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Under these definitions, direct or implied requests by a supervisor for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised job benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment constitutes sexual harassment.

The definition of sexual harassment is broad. In addition to the above examples, other unwelcome sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that has the effect of creating a work environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating or humiliating to either male or female workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances – whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one’s sex life; comment on an individual’s body, comment about an individual’s sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one’s sexual experiences; and,
- Discussion of one’s sexual activities.

All employees should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment, and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this organization.

### **III. Complaint Procedures**

All employees, managers, and supervisors of the **Town of Sudbury** share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging and reporting any form of discriminatory harassment.

If any of our employees believe that he or she has been subjected to discriminatory harassment, the employee has the right to file a complaint with the Town. This may be done in writing or orally and addressed to Stephanie Oliver, Human Resources Director; Andrew Sheehan, Town Manager; or in their absence your Department Head. In addition, residents, visitors, applicants, vendors, contractors, their agents and employees, or other third parties who believe they have been subjected to discriminatory harassment may also file a complaint with our organization using the procedures described herein. Furthermore, employees may also file a complaint if they have been subjected to harassment from residents, visitors, applicants, vendors, contractors, their agents and employees, or any other third parties in the workplace, while performing work-related duties, or during other work-related activities.

Prompt reporting of harassment is in the best interest of our organization and is essential to a fair, timely, and thorough investigation. Accordingly, complaints should be filed as soon as possible following the incident(s) at issue. The Human Resources Director is located in the Flynn Building at 278 Old Sudbury Road and can be reached by phone at (978) 639-3386. The Town Manager is also located in the Flynn Building at 278 Old Sudbury Road and can be reached by phone at (978) 639-3385. Department Heads who receive a complaint should immediately notify the Human Resources Director or Town Manager. These persons are also available to discuss any concerns you may have and to provide information to you about our policy on harassment and our complaint process.

### **IV. Complaint Investigation**

When the Town receives the complaint, we will promptly investigate the allegation in a fair and expeditious manner to determine whether there has been a violation of our policy. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. The Town's investigation will include private interviews with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. The Town will also interview the person alleged to have committed harassment. The complainant, the person alleged to have committed harassment, and all witnesses are required to fully cooperate with all aspects of an investigation. When we have completed our investigation, we will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of that investigation.

Notwithstanding any provision of this policy, we reserve the right to investigate and take action on our own initiative in response to behavior and conduct which may constitute harassment or otherwise be inappropriate, regardless of whether an actual complaint has been filed.

A complaint may be determined to be founded (the incident occurred as charged), unfounded (the incident is not harassment), or inconclusive (there is insufficient evidence to make a ruling either way). If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct, and where it is appropriate we will also impose disciplinary action.

### **V. Disciplinary Action**

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed by one of our employees, we will take such action as is appropriate under the circumstances. Such action may range from counseling to termination from employment, and may include such other forms of disciplinary action as we deem appropriate under the circumstances. If an employee believes that the investigation and/or the outcome of the investigation have not satisfactorily resolved the complaint, they may file a written appeal with the Town Manager. The Town Manager will review the case and will make a determination as to whether the resolution of the case was fair, equitable, and appropriate.

## **VI. Applicability**

All employees and all elected and appointed officials are subject to the provisions of this policy.

## **VII. State and Federal Remedies**

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to discriminatory harassment of any type, including sexual harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies requires that claims be filed within 300 days from the alleged incident of when the complainant became aware of the incident.

All employees and all elected and appointed officials are subject to the provisions of this policy.

### **The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”)**

One Congress Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02114,  
(617) 565-3200

### **The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (“MCAD”)**

Boston Office:  
One Ashburton Place, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 994-6000

Springfield Office:  
424 Dwight Street, Room 220  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413) 739-2145

Worcester Office:  
484 Main St. Room 320  
Worcester, MA 01608  
(508) 453-9630

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**Acknowledgment of Receipt of Discriminatory Harassment Policy**

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the provisions set forth in this Discriminatory Harassment Prevention Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness