



PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION PREVENTION POLICY

Pursuit of Excellence (hereinafter “POE”) is committed to providing a professional work environment free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation of any kind. This policy aims to inform POE volunteers and employees (if any) of the definition of discrimination, harassment and retaliatory conduct to prevent all forms of discriminatory, harassing, or retaliatory conduct in our organization and to outline procedures for addressing such violations of this policy.

POE prohibits discrimination and harassment based on the following characteristics: race, color, caste, religion, religious creed (including religious dress and grooming practices), national origin, ancestry, citizenship, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic conditions, genetic information, marital status, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), gender, gender identity, gender expression, reproductive health, age, sexual orientation, veteran or military status, domestic violence victim status, political affiliation, and any other characteristic protected by state or federal antidiscrimination law covering employment.

POE prohibits retaliation against a person who engages in activities protected under this policy or state or federal law. Reporting, or assisting in reporting, suspected violations of this policy and cooperating in investigations or proceedings arising out of a violation of this policy are protected activities under this policy

DEFINITIONS DISCRIMINATION --As used in this policy, “discrimination” means the unequal treatment of a volunteer, employee or applicant in any aspect of their employment and based solely or in part on any protected characteristic listed above.

DEFINITIONS HARASSMENT-- As used in this policy, “harassment” means disrespectful or unprofessional conduct that is not welcomed by the person being harassed and is based solely or in part on any protected characteristic listed above. Harassment can be:

- Verbal (such as slurs, jokes, insults, epithets, gestures, or teasing)

- Visual (such as posting or distributing offensive posters, symbols, cartoons, drawings, computer displays, or emails, staring, or leering)
- Physical (such as physically threatening another person, blocking someone's way, or making physical contact in an unwelcome manner)

DEFINITIONS SEXUAL HARASSMENT-- As used in this policy, "sexual harassment" means harassment based on sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. It includes all of the actions described above as harassment, as well as other unwelcome sex-based conduct including but not limited to unwelcome or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, conversations regarding sexual activities, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Under Federal law, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment at the occurrence of any of the following:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; and,
- 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.

California law defines sexual harassment as:

- Verbal harassment -- epithets, derogatory comments or slurs. Examples: Name-calling, belittling, sexually explicit or degrading words to describe an individual, sexually explicit jokes, comments about an employee's anatomy and/or dress, sexually-oriented noises or remarks, questions about a person's sexual practices, use of patronizing terms or remarks, verbal abuse, graphic verbal commentaries about the body.
- Physical harassment -- assault, impeding or blocking movement, or any physical interference with normal work or movement, when directed at an individual. Examples: touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against or poking another employee's body, hazing or initiation that involves a sexual component, requiring an employee to wear sexually suggestive clothing.

- Visual harassment -- derogatory posters, cartoons, or drawings. Examples: displaying sexual pictures, writing or objects, obscene letters or invitations, staring at an employee's anatomy, leering, sexually oriented gestures, mooning, unwanted love letters or notes.
- Sexual favors -- unwanted sexual advances which condition an employment benefit upon an exchange of sexual favors. Examples: continued requests for dates, any threat of demotion, termination, etc. If requested sexual favors are not given, making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances, propositioning an individual.
- Bullying, defined as repeated mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators. It is abusive conduct that is:
 1. Threatening, humiliating or intimidating, or
 2. Work interference – sabotage – which prevents work from getting done, or verbal abuse;
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors.

DEFINITIONS RETALIATION-- As used in this policy, “retaliation” means any adverse employment action taken against a volunteer, applicant or employee because that person participated in activity protected under this policy or reasonably thought to be protected under this policy. Examples of protected activities include, but are not limited to:

- Reporting or assisting someone in reporting suspected violations of this policy
- Cooperating in investigations or proceedings arising out of a violation of this policy
- Filing a complaint with the California Civil Rights Department or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

REPORTING AND ADDRESSING VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY Any volunteer, employee or applicant who experiences or witnesses behavior they believe violates this policy is encouraged to immediately tell the offending individual to stop and that the behavior is inappropriate, but only if they feel comfortable doing so. To report sexual harassment, the aggrieved party is to contact a member of the Board of Directors. Sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation should be reported immediately. An impartial, thorough and timely

investigation will be conducted by a qualified member of the Board of Directors and appropriate action will be taken including a timely closure. The Board of Directors will promptly investigate all reported incidents of sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation, and the investigation will be kept as confidential as possible. Appropriate remedial, corrective action and resolutions will be taken as warranted. Any individual affiliated with POE who, after the investigation, is determined to have engaged in any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. POE will document and track all information and evidence collected in the fact-finding investigative process.

Adopted by POE Board October 2024