

VILLAGE OF LONG GROVE

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDED POLICY PROHIBITING HARASSMENT  
(INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT) FOR THE VILLAGE OF LONG GROVE**

**WHEREAS**, the Village of Long Grove (the "**Village**") has established a policy addressing allegations of sexual harassment ("**Policy**");

**WHEREAS**, the Village desires to amend its Policy to bring it into conformity with recent amendments to Illinois law and to broaden the Policy to prohibit other forms of harassment;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, be it resolved by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Long Grove, County of Lake, State of Illinois, as follows:

Section 1. The Policy is hereby amended as set forth in **Exhibit A** attached hereto, and such amended Policy is hereby adopted as the "Policy Prohibiting Harassment" for the Village of Long Grove.

Section 2. This resolution and policy shall be in full force and effect upon its passage, approval, and publication in the manner provided by law.

PASSED This 14th day of July, 2020.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

APPROVED This 14th day of July, 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Jacob, Village President

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy Gayton, Village Clerk

**EXHIBIT A**

**Policy Prohibiting Harassment**

DRAFT

# POLICY PROHIBITING HARASSMENT<sup>1</sup>

## I. Introduction

It is the policy and practice of the Village of Long Grove (“**Village**”) to provide a professional working environment for its elected and appointed Village officials, as well as its agents, employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and other persons performing services for the Village pursuant to a contract, agency, or office (“**Village Personnel**”), so that they may carry out their duties in productive and professional work environment. A professional work environment includes, at a minimum, a workplace that is free of unlawful harassment. But the Village’s policy goes further. Any conduct of a harassing nature that adversely affects the work environment is unacceptable, even if that conduct does not rise to the level of being unlawful.

Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual’s race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, ancestry, age, marital status, military status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or other legally protected characteristic or classification (“**Protected Matters**”) by any Village Personnel will not be tolerated. Harassment of Village Personnel by non-employees, such as residents, suppliers and vendors, contractors, and other third parties with whom the Village Personnel interact while performing their duties, also is strictly prohibited.

Harassment does not include the reasonable statements and actions of supervisors and other managerial level employees intended to provide performance feedback or corrective action, such as performance evaluations, deficiency notices, warnings, counseling sessions, reprimands, performance improvement plans, and other actions intended to promote desired work performance.

## II. Scope

This policy applies to conduct in or connected to the workplace, whether it is physical or verbal, and irrespective of the status of the Village Personnel who commits it. This policy also governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, discharge, leaves of absence, and access to benefits and training.

All employees are responsible for cooperating in any investigation of alleged harassment, and for participating in periodic training regarding this policy.

The Village is committed to vigorously enforcing its policy against harassment at all levels. All Village Personnel must conduct themselves in a way that ensures they do not engage in acts of harassment. All supervisors and managers are responsible for making sure that the Village Personnel who report to them are aware of this policy, and those Village Personnel shall annually provide their supervisors and managers with written confirmation that they have reviewed this policy and will follow it. Additionally, all supervisors and managers are responsible for ensuring that their decisions comply with this policy and shall take corrective actions when inappropriate behavior occurs.

All supervisors and managers are responsible for documenting all alleged violations of this policy, the steps that were taken to investigate those allegations, the outcome of that investigation,

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<sup>1</sup> The provisions of this policy will apply only insofar as they do not conflict with any state or federal law.

and, if applicable, the discipline imposed. The Village Manager shall annually present a summary of this information to the Village Board during executive session.

### **III. Prohibition on All Forms of Harassment**

#### *a. Prohibition on Sexual Harassment*

It is unlawful to harass a person because of that person's sex. The courts have determined that sexual harassment is a form of discrimination under Title VII of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1991. All persons have a right to work in an environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unacceptable misconduct which affects individuals of all genders and sexual orientations. It is a policy of the Village to prohibit sexual harassment of any Village Personnel by any person. All Village Personnel are further prohibited from sexually harassing any person, regardless of any employment relationship or lack thereof.

#### *b. Definition of Sexual Harassment*

This policy adopts the definition of sexual harassment as stated in the Illinois Human Rights Act, which currently defines sexual harassment as:

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.

Conduct which may constitute sexual harassment includes:

- Verbal: sexual innuendos, suggestive comments, insults, humor, and jokes about sex, anatomy or gender-specific traits, sexual propositions, threats, repeated requests for dates, or statements about other persons, even outside of their presence, of a sexual nature.
- Non-verbal: suggestive or insulting sounds (whistling), leering, obscene gestures, sexually suggestive bodily gestures, "catcalls", "smacking" or "kissing" noises.
- Visual: posters, signs, pin-ups, or slogans of a sexual nature, viewing pornographic material or websites.
- Physical: touching, unwelcome hugging or kissing, pinching, brushing the body, any coerced sexual act or actual assault.
- Textual/Electronic: "sexting" (electronically sending messages with sexual content, including pictures and video), the use of sexually explicit language, harassment, cyber stalking and threats via all forms of electronic communication (e-mail, text/picture/video messages, intranet/on-line postings, blogs, instant messages and social network websites like Facebook and Twitter).

The most severe and overt forms of sexual harassment are easier to determine. On the other end of the spectrum, some sexual harassment is more subtle and depends, to some extent, on individual perception and interpretation. The courts will assess sexual harassment by a standard of what would offend a “reasonable person.”

c. *Prohibition on Other Forms of Harassment.*

The Village also prohibits other forms of harassment, such as slurs or other verbal or physical conduct, relating to Protected Matters when:

- (1) such conduct may have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance; or
- (2) such conduct may have the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**IV. Procedure for Reporting an Allegation of Harassment**

Any Village Personnel who either observes harassment or believes herself/himself to be the object of harassment should deal with the incident(s) as directly and firmly as possible by clearly communicating her/his position to the offending person and her/his immediate supervisor. If this direct communication makes the Village Personnel uncomfortable, they may report the incident, confidentially or otherwise, to their immediate supervisor, the Village Manager, or the Village President. It is not necessary for harassment to be directed at the person making the report.

Any Village Personnel may report conduct which is believed to be harassment, including the following:

- *Electronic/Direct Communication.* If there is harassing behavior in the workplace, the harassed person should directly and clearly express her/his objection that the conduct is unwelcome and request that the offending behavior stop. The initial message may be verbal. If subsequent messages are needed, they should be put in writing in a note or a memo. As noted above, this direct communication makes the harassed person uncomfortable, they may report the incident, confidentially or otherwise, to their immediate supervisor, the Village Manager, or the Village President.
- *Contact with Supervisory Personnel.* At the same time direct communication is undertaken, or in the event the Village Personnel feels uncomfortable with direct communication, the problem must be promptly reported to the immediate supervisor of the person making the report, the Village Manager, the Village President, or chief executive officer of the Village.

The Village Personnel experiencing what he or she believes to be harassment must not assume that the Village is aware of the conduct. If there are no witnesses and the victim fails to notify a supervisor or other responsible officer, the Village will not be presumed to have knowledge of the harassment.

- *Resolution Outside Village.* The purpose of this policy is to establish prompt, thorough, and effective procedures for responding to every report and incident so that problems can

be identified and remedied by the Village. However, all Village Personnel have the right to contact the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for information regarding filing a formal complaint with those entities. A complaint with the IDHR or the EEOC must be filed within 300 days of the alleged incident(s) unless it is a continuing offense.

Documentation of any incident may be submitted with any report (what was said or done, the date, the time and the place), including, but not limited to, written records such as letters, notes, memos and telephone messages.

All allegations, including anonymous reports, will be accepted and investigated regardless of how the matter comes to the attention of the Village. However, because of the serious implications of sexual harassment charges and the difficulties associated with their investigation and the questions of credibility involved, the claimant's willing cooperation is a vital component of an effective inquiry and an appropriate outcome.

#### **V. Prohibition on Retaliation for Reporting Sexual Harassment Allegations**

No Village Personnel shall take any retaliatory action against any other person due to their:

- (1) Disclosure or threatened disclosure of any violation of this policy,
- (2) The provision of information related to or testimony before any public body conducting an investigation, hearing or inquiry into any violation of this policy, or
- (3) Assistance or participation in a proceeding to enforce the provisions of this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, retaliatory action includes, but is not limited to, reprimand, discharge, suspension, demotion, narrowing of job responsibilities in a manner that harms potential for career or financial advancement, denial of promotion or transfer, or other change in the terms or conditions of employment of any Village Personnel that is taken in retaliation for their involvement in protected activity pursuant to this policy.

As further provided in Section VI, retaliation is prohibited even if the report is unsubstantiated, so long as the report was made in good faith. In addition, any witness will be protected from retaliation.

Similar to the prohibition against retaliation contained herein, the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/15-10) provides whistleblower protection from retaliatory action such as reprimand, discharge, suspension, demotion, or denial of promotion or transfer that occurs in retaliation for a person who does any of the following:

- (1) Discloses or threatens to disclose to a supervisor or to a public body an activity, policy, or practice of any officer, member, State agency, or other State employee that the State employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, rule, or regulation,
- (2) Provides information to or testifies before any public body conducting an investigation, hearing, or inquiry into any violation of a law, rule, or regulation by any officer, member, State agency or other State employee, or
- (3) Assists or participates in a proceeding to enforce the provisions of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.

Pursuant to the Whistleblower Act (740 ILCS 174/15(a)), an employer may not retaliate against an employee who discloses information in a court, an administrative hearing, or before a legislative commission or committee, or in any other proceeding, where the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a State or federal law, rule, or regulation. In addition, an employer may not retaliate against an employee for disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency, where the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a State or federal law, rule, or regulation. (740 ILCS 174/15(b)).

According to the Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/6-101), it is a civil rights violation for a person, or for two or more people to conspire, to retaliate against a person because he/she has opposed that which he/she reasonably and in good faith believes to be sexual harassment in employment, because he/she has made a charge, filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Any Village Personnel who is suddenly transferred to a lower paying job or passed over for a promotion after filing a complaint with IDHR or EEOC, may file a retaliation charge within 300 days after the alleged retaliation, or otherwise in accordance with the procedures established by the relevant agency.

#### **VI. Consequences of a Violation of the Prohibition on Harassment**

In addition to any and all other discipline that may be applicable pursuant to Village policies, employment agreements, procedures, employee handbooks and/or collective bargaining agreement, any person who violates this policy may be subject to applicable discipline or discharge by the Village and any applicable fines and penalties established pursuant to local ordinance, State law, or Federal law. Additionally, any person who violates the Prohibition on Sexual Harassment contained in 5 ILCS 430/5-65 may be subject to a fine of up to \$5,000 per offense. Each violation may constitute a separate offense. Any discipline imposed by the Village shall be separate and distinct from any penalty imposed by an ethics commission and any fines or penalties imposed by a court of law or a State or Federal agency.

#### **VII. Consequences for Knowingly Making a False Report**

A false report is a report of harassment made by an accuser using the harassment report to accomplish some end other than stopping harassment or retaliation for reporting harassment, but does not include a report made in good faith which cannot be proven. Given the seriousness of the consequences for the accused, a false report is a severe offense that can itself result in disciplinary action. Any person who intentionally makes a false report alleging a violation of any provision of this policy shall be subject to discipline or discharge pursuant to applicable Village policies, employment agreements, procedures, employee handbooks, and/or collective bargaining agreements.

In addition, any person who intentionally makes a false report alleging a violation of any provision of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act to an ethics commission, an inspector general, the State Police, a State's Attorney, the Attorney General, or any other law enforcement official is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. An ethics commission may levy an administrative fine of up to \$5,000 against any person who intentionally makes a false, frivolous, or bad faith allegation.