

Respectful Workplace Policy

1.0 Purpose Bladen County recognizes its responsibility to build and maintain a respectful workplace, where all employees and citizens enjoy an environment in which the dignity and self-respect of every person is valued and which is free of offensive remarks, material or behavior. This policy establishes a standard for appropriate workplace conduct. This policy covers all County employees, including regular, temporary, contract workers, volunteers, and anyone else on County property or engaged in County business with a County employee, whether or not on County property. Violation of this policy by any individual will be subject to appropriate corrective action. Violation of this policy by a County employee may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

2.0 Policy It is the policy of Bladen County to maintain a professional and respectful work and public service environment. The County will not tolerate disrespectful behavior by or towards any employee or other individual by employees, visitors or vendors.

This policy provides for:

- a. Fostering a workplace which values diversity; personal dignity; courteous conduct; mutual respect, fairness and equality; positive communication between people; collaborative working relationships;
- b. A reporting/complaint procedure for any individual who experiences or witnesses behavior prohibited by this policy;
- c. A response procedure for supervisors who become aware of behavior prohibited by this policy;
- d. Accountability for violations or enforcement failures through appropriate disciplinary actions;
- e. Actions by the County to heighten employees' and supervisors' awareness of workplace violence issues, including domestic violence as it relates to the workplace.

This policy prohibits disrespectful behavior, including but not limited to, the following:

- a. Offensive and inappropriate remarks, gestures, material and behavior;
- b. Grouping or isolating;
- c. Yelling;
- d. Belittling;
- e. Reprimanding in the presence of others;
- f. Aggressive or patronizing behavior;
- g. Embarrassing or humiliating behavior;
- h. Damaging gossip or rumors;
- i. Covert behavior, i.e., inappropriately withholding information, undermining, underhandedness;
- j. Unlawful discrimination or harassment as defined by federal and state laws;

Employee Responsibilities:

- a. Treat others with respect;
- b. Set an example by respecting the dignity and human rights of all employees and members of the public;
- c. Recognize and refrain from actions that offend, embarrass or humiliate others;
- d. Address disrespectful conduct with the employee displaying it or with a person in authority as soon as possible;
- e. Do not make allegations of disrespectful behavior that are frivolous or vindictive;
- f. Make every effort to resolve respectful workplace issues in an informal manner, when possible.

3.0 Procedure

3.1 Reporting

An employee who believes he or she has been subjected to a violation of this policy and who has either opted not to try to personally resolve the situation or who has been unsuccessful in attempting a resolution should report the violation immediately to his or her supervisor. If the employee's supervisor is the source of the alleged policy violation, or if the employee's supervisor does not respond to the report in a timely and appropriate manner, the employee should contact the Human Resources Department.

3.2 Investigating

Bladen County will promptly and thoroughly investigate any verbal or written report of a violation of this policy, and will respond to the reporting employee or other individual regarding the results of the investigation, except that specific personnel actions taken may not be revealed. The investigation will be kept reasonably confidential; however, it may be necessary to confront the employee who has allegedly violated the policy concerning the allegation.

3.3 Corrective Action

Any employee found to have acted in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate corrective and disciplinary actions, up to and including dismissal. Any visitor or vendor found to have acted in violation of this policy shall be subject to responsive action as determined appropriate by the County, up to and including being removed from the workplace and being prohibited from returning in the future.

3.4 Retaliation

Bladen County will not tolerate retaliation or intimidation directed towards any employee or other individual who makes a verbal or written report of a violation of this policy or serves as a witness to a violation of this policy. Any individual who retaliates against or intimidates an employee making a report or a witness shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.