Kalamazoo College Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

Kalamazoo College is concerned and committed to the safety of our employees, students and visitors. The College will not tolerate any type of violence or threatening behavior in the workplace and will make every effort to prevent violent incidents from occurring.

Definition
Workplace Violence is defined as all forms of physical violence; direct, indirect, veiled or conditional threats of violence; stalking; threats to or at the workplace made by the violent or abusive partner of an employee; and erratic, aggressive, or other conduct (including property damage) that generates a reasonable concern for safety. Whether exhibited by or targeted toward faculty, staff, students, visitors, contractors, or any other person with a connection to Kalamazoo College, such behavior will not be tolerated.

Reporting
Providing a safe and healthy working environment is a collective responsibility. All employees shall adhere to the working practices, policies and procedures that are designed to the make the College as healthy, safe and secure as possible. To that end, and in the interest of preventing workplace violence, Kalamazoo College requires faculty, staff, students and visitors to report any incident of workplace violence as defined above to a supervisor, the Office of Human Resources, or the Office of Security.

If there is an immediate threat or incident of workplace violence contact local law enforcement by phoning 911.

If possible, contact the Office of Security afterward at 269.337.7321.

If immediate action is not required and there are concerns that an incident may occur, contact your supervisor, the Office of Human Resources at 269.337.7225, or the Office of Security at 269.337.7321. Students may also contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 269.337.7209.

Although incidents of workplace violence can be initially reported verbally (by phone or in person), they shall later be documented in writing and will be confidentially held by the Office of Human Resources. Ideally, the complainant will write the report, though the supervisor or Director of Human Resources may also do so. The College will not tolerate retaliation against a person who makes a report of workplace violence and/or participates in investigations in good faith. Similarly, anyone who knowingly makes a false report will be subject to disciplinary action.

If gender or sex is an issue in an incident of workplace violence, then relevant reports will be shared with the campus Title IX Coordinator.
Investigation

The College will take all reports of violent and threatening incidents seriously by investigating and taking the appropriate action to mitigate any hazard that would place a person or the campus at risk.

The campus Investigation Team will investigate reports, assess the risk of violence, and respond to reports/make recommendations for resolution. Typical activities the Team may engage in include gathering additional information, consulting with legal or other experts, referral to the Employee Assistance Program, encouraging medical attention, working with local law enforcement, and a variety of other activities. The Team will also provide supportive resources to potential targets or victims of workplace violence that may include counseling, workplace accommodations, and sharing information. In some cases, the Harassment Policy may pertain more directly to reported behavior than this policy. In such cases, the Harassment Policy will be followed.

The Investigation Team may include any or all of the following members. Other campus members with relevant expertise or interest may also be involved in the investigation:

- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Security
- Director of the Counseling Center
- Vice President for Student Development/Dean of Students
- Vice President or Provost of division where the accused is employed
- Title IX Coordinator

In an urgent situation, the College reserves the right to remove, ban from campus, and/or suspend from duty any individual whose behavior is suggestive of workplace violence. Disciplinary processes as outlined in the student and employee handbooks and the faculty plan of employment will be adhered to. Additionally, an employee who has engaged in workplace violence may be terminated from employment and/or face criminal penalties, in addition to the action outlined above, as determined by the Director of Human Resources and appropriate President’s Staff member(s).

Approved by Presidents Staff
October 14, 2013
Workplace Violence Prevention and Education

All employees will be reminded of the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy annually. Additionally, training will be provided to all employees, with appropriate additional training for supervisors and Employee Advisors. The goals of such education and training are 1) to prevent workplace violence and 2) to familiarize employees with the policy.

Workplace violence can occur in almost any setting, even at institutions of higher education. In most cases, an angry visitor/employee might have exchanged some angry words or uttered some idle threat to another employee about an issue or subject they will most likely forget, given a few days. Occasionally even quiet, nice, respectable visitors or employees have been pushed to a point that resulted in an occupational injury.

Internal conditions that cause employee anger and frustration include:

1. Changes in the economy
2. Layoffs
3. Insensitive terminations
4. Overbearing managers and supervisors
5. Pressure to increase productivity
6. Psychological instability
7. Financial difficulties
8. Family abnormalities including personal or family illness

External conditions that might place an employee at higher risk of violence might include:

1. Working alone and/or at night
2. Exchange of money with the public
3. Guarding valuable property
4. Working with the public

Prevention:
In order to best protect the faculty, staff, students and visitors of Kalamazoo College from workplace violence, it is essential to:

1. Recognize the warning signs
2. Reduce the risk, if possible
3. Know how to respond appropriately
4. Take action

Warning signs include:

1. Direct threats, such as "I'll get even with you"
2. Implied threats
   "This place would not function if the main computer shut down"
3. **Conditional threats**  
"If they fire me, there will be hell to pay."

4. **Other signs include:**

   - Unusually argumentative behaviors
   - Lack of cooperation with others
   - Problem with authority or person of the opposite sex
   - Bizarre behavior
   - Increased dependency on alcohol or drugs
   - History of violence
   - Changes in work patterns (i.e. out sick frequently)
   - Blames others for personal problems
   - Numerous conflicts with coworkers or supervisor
   - Aggressive behavior
   - Discussing or displaying weapons in the workplace
   - Fascination with past workplace violence incidents
   - Statements indicating desperation or planned suicide over personal problems

These signs could be an indication that something is wrong, and should be **reported to one’s supervisor or Human Resources immediately**. They should not be ignored.

A copy of the Kalamazoo College Workplace Violence Prevention Policy is available to all employees at the office of Human Resources (https://reason.kzoo.edu/hr).