

SOUTHWEST TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**SUBJECT: Prevention of Workplace Violence****EFFECTIVE DATE: May 2, 2001; Revised April 28, 2023; Revised October 5, 2026****Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the intention of Southwest Tennessee Community College ("Southwest" or "the College") to provide all employees with a workplace free from physical violence, threats, and intimidation.

Definitions

Violence or threats- Acts, conduct, or communications, whether verbal, written, electronic, nonverbal, or physical, that threaten, intimidate, harass, or cause a reasonable person to fear bodily harm, death, injury, or damage to property, including:

- create fear of bodily harm;
- cause or can cause death or bodily injury;
- threaten the safety of a co-worker, student or member of the public; or
- damage property.

Acts and threats of violence- Include, but are not limited to: verbal threats, harassment, abuse, or intimidation; threatening gestures or other nonverbal conduct; written or electronic communications, including email, text messages, or social media; physical conduct, including hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, unwanted touching, or assault; and other conduct such as arson, sabotage, vandalism, or stalking.

Employee- For purposes of this policy, all faculty, executive, administrative, professional, and support staff employed by and compensated by Southwest. This definition does not include independent contractors or student workers.

Reasonable Suspicion- The degree of knowledge sufficient to cause an ordinarily prudent and cautious person to believe that the circumstances being presented are more likely to be true than not. Reasonable suspicion must be based on an articulable, specific and objective basis and may include direct observation or information received from a source believed to be reliable.

Workplace or Work Site- All real property owned or occupied by Southwest, College vehicles, and personal vehicles when being used to perform College business.

Policy**I. Commitment to a Safe and Healthy Workplace**

- A. Southwest seeks to provide a safe, healthy, and secure work environment for its employees.
- B. The College expects its employees to maintain a high level of productivity and efficiency.
- C. The use of violence or threats of violence in the workplace are inconsistent with these objectives. Southwest expects all employees to report to the work site and perform their duties in a safe and productive manner, without violence or threats of violence toward any individual. Violence, threats, or intimidation toward any individual will not be tolerated.

D. Southwest's Code of Conduct Policy, [5:00:00:00/41](#), and Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Policy [7.01.00.00](#), Firearms and Other Weapons, govern the possession, carrying, and use of firearms and other weapons on property owned or controlled by the College. To the extent this policy conflicts with applicable law or TBR Policy [7.01.00.00](#), applicable law and TBR policy control.

II. Applicability

- A. The provisions of this policy apply to all Southwest employees and to all work sites owned or occupied by the College.
- B. This policy also applies to any employee conduct, on or off the work site, that creates a substantial threat to people or property within the College community.

III. Implementation

It is the responsibility of the Office of People and Culture to ensure that all employees are informed about this policy. This policy shall be posted on the College's website within the policy manual, and a copy shall be made available to each new employee.

Employees who witness violence or threats of violence must immediately report the conduct to the College's Police Services/Public Safety department or local law enforcement when emergency assistance is needed, and to the appropriate supervisor and the Office of People and Culture.

Employees who are victims of violence or threats of violence in the workplace are encouraged to report the conduct immediately to the College's Police Services/Public Safety department or local law enforcement when emergency assistance is needed, and to the appropriate supervisor and the Office of People and Culture.

IV. Prohibited Activities

- A. Southwest specifically prohibits the following:

Possessing, carrying, storing, or using a firearm or other weapon in violation of applicable law, Southwest's Code of Conduct Policy, [5:00:00:00/41](#), or TBR Policy [7.01.00.00](#), Firearms and Other Weapons.

Refusing to comply with a lawful request by authorized College Police Services/Public Safety personnel relating to a prohibited weapon, consistent with applicable law and College policy.

Refusing to permit an inspection of College-owned or College-controlled storage areas or property when authorized by applicable law and supported by reasonable suspicion that a prohibited weapon is present.

Conviction under any criminal statute for the illegal use or possession of a weapon or for committing a violent act against the person or property of another.

- Refusing to cooperate in an authorized investigation of allegations or reasonable suspicion that violence or threats of violence have occurred or are likely to occur, or that an employee or co-worker possesses a prohibited weapon.
- Engaging in violence or threats of violence.

- Repeated verbal abuse in the workplace, including derogatory remarks, insults, and epithets.
- Verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a threatening, intimidating, or humiliating nature in the workplace.

B. An employee who engages in any of these prohibited activities will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

V. Permissible Activities

The following activities do not violate this policy when conducted lawfully and without threats, intimidation, or violence:

1. Disciplinary procedures conducted in accordance with Southwest or TBR policies and guidelines;
2. Routine coaching and counseling, including feedback about and correction of work performance;
3. Reasonable work assignments, including shift, post, and overtime assignments;
4. Individual differences in style or personal expression that are otherwise legally permissible.
5. Passionate, loud expression with no intent to harm others and that are otherwise legally permissible;
6. Differences of opinion on work-related concerns; or
7. The non-abusive exercise of managerial prerogative.

VI. Reporting

An employee who witnesses an incident of violence, threats of violence, or suspicious behavior must immediately report the incident to the College's Police Services/Public Safety department or local law enforcement when emergency assistance is needed, and to the appropriate supervisor and the Office of People and Culture.

A. Any employee who is given a court order requiring any other individual to stay away from the employee's place of work must furnish a copy of the order to the College's department of Police Services/Public Safety as soon as practicable.

A supervisor who witnesses or receives a report of violence, threats of violence, or suspicious behavior must immediately report the conduct to the College's Police Services/Public Safety department and the Office of People and Culture.

VII. Right to Search for Weapons

Consistent with applicable law and TBR Policy [7.01.00.00](#), authorized College Police Services/Public Safety personnel may conduct a search for illegally possessed weapons in College-owned or College-controlled areas, property, containers, equipment, and vehicles, and in other circumstances permitted by law. Searches involving personal property or vehicles shall be based on lawful authority and, when feasible, conducted in consultation with the Office of

General Counsel.

VIII. Prohibition on Retaliation

Employees who report incidents of threats, violence, intimidating conduct, or illegal possession of weapons; bring a complaint, or assist in the investigation of a complaint, will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, discriminated against, or discharged because of their actions in this regard.

Source of Policy: N/A

Responsible

Administrator: VP of People & Culture

Related Policy: 5:00:00:00/9

TBR Policy Reference: 5.01.00.01

Approved: 
President

Date: October 5, 2026