Volunteer State Community College employees have the right to work in an environment free from physical violence, threats, and intimidation. Volunteer State Community College has a strong commitment to its employees to provide a safe, healthy and secure work environment. Volunteer State Community College also expects its employees to maintain a high level of productivity and efficiency. The presence of weapons and the occurrence of violence or threats of violence in the workplace are inconsistent with these objectives. Volunteer State Community College expects all employees to report to the work site without possessing weapons, with the exception of Volunteer State Community College Campus Police Officers, and to perform their jobs without violence or threats of violence toward any other individual and to be able to perform their duties in a safe and productive manner. Violence, threats, or intimidation toward any individual will not be tolerated. Weapons of any kind are prohibited in the workplace.

Volunteer State Community College employees who are victims of or witness to violence or threats of violence must immediately report such conduct to campus or local law enforcement, appropriate supervisor, and the Director of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer.

1. COVERAGE

This policy applies to all employees and work sites owned or occupied by Volunteer State Community College. In addition, this policy applies to any conduct, on or off the work site, which poses a substantial threat to persons or property within the institutional community.

2. DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS POLICY:

A. Violence or threats: Include acts of violence or threats of aggression including gestures or oral, or written expression which:

1) create fear of bodily harm;
2) cause or are capable of causing death or bodily injury;
3) threaten the safety of a co-worker, student or member of the general public;
4) or, damage property.

Acts of violence and threats of violence include, but are not limited to: verbal (such as threats, harassment, abuse or intimidation), nonverbal (such as gestures and intimidation), written communication (such as notes, e-mail), physical (such as hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, touching and assault), and other (such as arson, sabotage, vandalism and stalking).

B. Weapon: Includes a device, instrument, material or substance used for, or can cause death or bodily injury, or damage to property. Weapons include, but are not limited to: an
explosive or an explosive weapon, a device principally designed, made or adapted for delivering or shooting an explosive weapon, a machine gun, a rifle or shotgun, a handgun, a firearm silencer, a switchblade knife or any other type of knife, or brass knuckles, or any other implement for infliction of bodily injury, damage to property, or death which has no common lawful purpose. Pocket knives or knives used solely for eating, food preparation or distribution, are not considered "weapons" for purposes of these policies unless used to inflict bodily injury or damage to property.

C. On the Worksite/In the Workplace: Includes all real property owned or occupied by TBR, TBR vehicles and personal vehicles when performing state business off campus.

D. Possession: Includes, but is not limited to, the presence of a weapon on the employee, in his/her motor vehicle, desk, lunch box, locker, a tool kit, bag, purse, cabinets, office, etc.

E. Reasonable Suspicion: The degrees of knowledge sufficient to induce 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 articulatory, specific and objective basis and may include direct observation; or information received from a source believed to be reliable.

F. Employee: For purposes of this policy, persons receiving a payroll check, with exception of graduate assistants or student workers.

3. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES
Volunteer State Community College specifically prohibits the following and may discipline an employee up to and including dismissal for any of the following:

A. Use, possession, or sale of any weapon on the work site.

B. Storing any weapon in a locker, desk, lunch box, tool kit, bag, purse or other repository on the work site.

C. Refusing to submit to an inspection for the presence of a weapon based on reasonable suspicion.

D. Refusing to allow inspection of storage areas specified in 6.2 above based on a reasonable suspicion that a weapon or weapons will be found in such area.

E. 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.

F. Refusing to cooperate in an investigation about allegations or suspicion that violence or threats of violence have or is likely to occur, or an investigation about the possession of a weapon by the employee or a co-employee.
G. Engaging in violence or threats of violence.

NOTE: Despite laws which provide for permits allowing individuals to carry concealed handguns, it is the policy of Volunteer State Community College, pursuant to T.C.A. §39-17-1309, to prohibit the possession of all weapons, including handguns, on property owned, operated or under the control of Volunteer State Community College. The only exceptions to this prohibition are as follows:

1) Firearms used for instructional or school-sanctioned ceremonial purposes;
2) Persons employed in the army, air force, navy, coast guard or marine service of the United States or any member of the Tennessee national guard when in the discharge of their official duties and acting under orders requiring them to carry arms or weapons;
3) Civil officers of the United States in the discharge of their official duties;
4) Officers and soldiers of the militia and the national guard when called into actual service;
5) Officers of the state, or any county, city or town, charged with the enforcement of the laws of the state, when in the discharge of their official duties;
6) Any students who are members of the reserve officers training corps or students enrolled in a course of instruction or members of a club or team, and who are required to carry arms or weapons in the discharge of their official class or team duties;
7) Any private police employed by the institution in the discharge of their duties;
8) Any registered security officer/guard who meets licensing requirements, who is discharging such officer's official duties.
9) Any law enforcement officer, policeman, or bonded and a sworn deputy sheriff may carry handguns always pursuant to a written directive by the executive supervisor of the organization to which the person is attached or employed, despite the person's regular duty hours or assignments.

4. DISCIPLINE

A Volunteer State Community College employee who violates this policy by engaging in any of the prohibited activities of Section 4, pursuant to Volunteer State Community College and Tennessee Board of Regents policies and guidelines, is subject to discipline up to and including immediate dismissal. Any Volunteer State Community College employee who violates this policy by bringing a weapon onto the work site whose employment is not terminated will be subject to searches from time to time, for an indefinite period not to exceed one (1) year from the date of the violation. A Volunteer State Community College employee's consent to submit to a search for weapons, based on reasonable suspicion, is required as a condition of continued employment and the employee's refusal to consent may result in disciplinary action, possibly including dismissal.

Students who violate this policy are subject to discipline as per VSCC Policy III:00:05.
5. REPORTING

Any Volunteer State Community College employee, who is a victim or witnesses an incident of violence, threats of violence or suspicious behavior, must immediately report such conduct to campus or local law enforcement, appropriate supervisor and the Director of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer. Any Volunteer State Community College employee who is granted 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 Office of Human Resources and Campus Police Department when practicable. Supervisory Responsibility - A supervisor who witnesses an incident of violence, threats of violence or suspicious behavior, must immediately report such conduct.

6. MISCELLANEOUS

Volunteer State Community College has the right to search any area on Volunteer State Community College premises for weapons including, but not limited to, lockers, furniture, containers, drawers, equipment or other facilities, lunch boxes, briefcases, personal bags, personal toolboxes or tool kits, parking lots, Volunteer State Community College vehicles and other vehicles parked on Volunteer State Community College owned or occupied premises. However, such searches will be based only on a reasonable suspicion that a weapon or weapons will be found. If feasible prior to conducting a search, the Office of General Counsel should be consulted. If an employee is injured while participating in a fight or after instigating a fight, then entitlement to workers' compensation benefits may be denied, as consistent with Tennessee law. No part of this policy or any procedure therein, is intended to be construed as a guarantee or contract of employment or continued employment.

7. NON-RETALIATION

This Policy also prohibits retaliation against employees who report incidents of threats, violence, intimidating conduct, or weapons possession. Any employee bringing complaint or assisting in the investigation of such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, discriminated against or discharged because of the complaint.

8. EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to this policy, not otherwise prohibited by law, must be approved by the President.

9. TYPES OF CAMPUS WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace violence may occur on campus from three areas.

A. Third party intrusion into the workplace – According to recent research, the greatest potential for workplace violence occurs when a person who is not a member of the campus community enters the workplace. This can be the estranged or recently divorced husband or wife, the ex-boyfriend or girlfriend, or the emotionally disturbed person.
B. Student vs. Employee – Students who display verbal or physical aggressive behavior toward a number or group of employees. High risk areas include but are not limited to:

1) Student Services
2) Financial Aid
3) Campus Police
4) Disability Services
5) Library
6) Business Office
7) Advising Center
8) Faculty member/Classroom

C. Disgruntled employees – The disgruntled employee usually directs act(s) of violence toward coworkers, supervisors, or managers. This type of employee feels that the college has taken something important from them, such as their job, and feels the college has a moral obligation to provide that which was taken away. The violence typically includes injury to co-workers, supervisors, and himself/herself. Red flags or warning behaviors – The subject may show or have:

1) Signs of increasing stress
2) Negative changes in behavior
3) Deterioration in work performance
4) Increasingly unkempt personal appearance
5) Alcohol or substance abuse
6) Distress over personal or workplace problems
7) Strange or unusual behavior
8) Confrontational or argumentative behavior
9) Anxious, withdrawn, or secretive behavior
10) Made veiled threats & intimidated others
11) Refused to take responsibility for actions
12) Found fault and blamed others
13) Obsession with weapons and empathy with those resort to violence

D. Criminal Acts – Other miscellaneous types of workplace violence that may occur on campus include violence that takes place during the commission of a robbery or other crime. A terrorist or hate crime may be the criminal who sends bombs or explosive devices through the mail.

10. GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES

All threats and acts of aggressive or violent behavior should be taken seriously and reported immediately. Such threats or acts include the following:
1) Argues frequently with, is belligerent towards, or repeatedly swears at coworkers, faculty, staff, or students
2) Sabotages equipment or intentionally damages property
3) Verbalizes wish or intent to hurt co-workers, students, faculty, or staff
4) Sends violent written, verbal, or visual communications to co-workers, faculty, staff, students
5) Threatens suicide
6) Destroys property
7) Engages in physical altercations
8) Possesses or displays weapons

11. EMPLOYEE REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY GUIDELINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject may show signs of increasing stress, perhaps involving negative changes in behavior; a deterioration in work performance; increasingly unkempt appearance; alcohol or substance abuse; distress over personal workplace problems; may act strange or unusual by appearing confrontational, argumentative, stressed, anxious, withdrawn or secretive. Behavior is such to cause concern for person’s own health or that of others.</td>
<td>Subject may make veiled threats to harm/intimidate other; have a history of violent behavior and lose temper easily; be chronically disgruntled, inflexible; refuse to take responsibility for problems; find fault with and blame others; have a deep sense of entitlement; have an obsession with weapons and empathy with those who resort to violence.</td>
<td>Subject may make blatant threats to harm others and/or destroy property; engages in serious physical fighting with peers or family members; is carrying a weapon, particularly a firearm, on campus and has threatened to use it; engages in severe destruction of property; gives detailed threats of lethal violence.</td>
<td>Subject is violent toward others or property; displays overt acts of violence or out-of-control behavior; may or may not involve the use of a weapon or result in death.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response by Witness</td>
<td>If subject is known, report incident or observations to subject’s administrative head or, if the subject is a student, to student affairs. If the subject is</td>
<td></td>
<td>Call Campus Police 3911</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Head, Faculty, Chair, Supervisor</td>
<td>unknown call Campus Police. Counsel subject, explaining the inappropriateness of behavior. Suggests use of employee assistance program (EAP) as appropriate. Document incident. Take disciplinary action and/or refer for counseling when appropriate. (If incident or observations are report to an outside news source, advise Human Relations.) Call Campus Police. Assist subject’s administrative head in ascertaining appropriate action, including disciplinary action and/or encouragement to participate in EAP (for faculty/staff) or counseling and testing (for students). Contact Campus Police.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources (for faculty/staff) or Vice President of Student Services (for students)</td>
<td>Or call 911 police</td>
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| Campus Police | Take appropriate action, including discipline or discharge. When appropriate, pursue legal action with the college’s counsel’s office. Contact human resources and Campus Police. Assist subject’s administrative head in ascertaining appropriate action, including disciplinary action or termination (for faculty/staff) or expulsion (for students). May assist college counsel with facts if legal action is necessary. Contact Campus Police. |

| Employee Assistance Program | Investigate incident and take appropriate action, which may involve arrest, and advise appropriate college offices. Coordinate interviews with police. Usually not directly involved at this level if subject has violated college policy or broken the law. Subject will be handled administratively or legally. Campus Police. |

| Victim’s Assistance Program | Comfort victim. Advise of services available and assist victim in working with police and other agencies in the |
appropriate. Advise of services available.  

At Level 4, also comfort co-workers and family as appropriate. Assist college in returning to normal.

12. GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS

Allegations of violence or threats of violence brought to the attention of or witnessed by the supervisor or other management should be reported immediately to the Chief of Campus Police or designee. The Chief of Campus Police or designee will investigate in a timely and thorough manner and will notify the Crisis Management Review Team. When possible the investigation will be conducted confidentially to the extent that only those parties who have a definite need to be involved to investigate the issue will be included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>The subject may</td>
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<td>Behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Show signs of increasing stress, perhaps involving negative changes in behavior.</td>
<td>Make veiled threats to harm. Intimidate others Have a history of violent behavior and lose temper easily. Be chronically disgruntled, inflexible. Refuse to take responsibility for problems or actions. Find fault with and blame others. Have a deep sense of entitlement. Have an obsession with weapons and empathy with those who resort to violence.</td>
<td>Make blatant threats to harm others and/or destroy property. Carry a weapon on campus. Engage in serious aggressive behavior such as verbal abuse, physical in-your-face posturing.</td>
<td>Is violent toward others or property. Displays overt acts of violence or out-of-control behavior. May or may not use a weapon or cause death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor’s Guidelines for Action</td>
<td>Engage subject in conversation to gain insight into behavior.</td>
<td>Report concerns to Campus Police and Human Resources before any effort to engage person.</td>
<td>Warn those who may be in immediate danger.</td>
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<td>Carefully offer to help.</td>
<td>Engage person in conversation, if appropriate, to gain insight into potential for violent behavior.</td>
<td>Call Campus Police.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Report concerns, if continuing, Campus Police and seek specific outcome.</td>
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<td>If Subject is present and seriously acting out, call 3911 – Campus Police or 911 – Police.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Seek Consultation from Human Resources.</td>
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</table>

13. GUIDELINES FOR THE VICTIM

The safety and security of the college’s employees is important. Each individual situation is evaluated by the review team, and the following security measures may be implemented:

A. Escorts by a uniformed officer to and from the victim’s vehicle to the workplace.
B. Parking vehicle at Campus Police Department area.
C. Alerting co-workers to possibility of danger and what to do.
D. Arranging office furniture and identifying escape routes.

14. INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING

Following a threat or act of violence in the workplace, employees, witnesses, their families and co-workers often suffer from stress-related ailments such as insomnia, depression, anger, and headaches or other physical and mental problems. Debriefing provides victims and others affected by the event the opportunity to express thoughts and feelings about what happened. The following resources are made available by the college:

A. Provide debriefing by trained counselors within 24 to 72 hours after incident.
B. Professional counseling through the employee assistance program (EAP).
C. Frequent follow up visits by a Campus Police Officer to show support, answer questions, and address concerns.

15. THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT REVIEW TEAM

The Chief of Campus Police, President, Vice President’s, Director of Public Relations, Director of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer, and others deemed appropriate, will be the review team and analyze all information gathered during threat investigations. When the incident involves a student, the Vice President of Student Services, will be added to the review team whose responsibility will be to review and analyze all information gathered during threat investigations. They will consider criminal aspects, civil aspects, health issues, and effects on co-workers. The team will make all notifications to families (as needed). The team, in cooperation with the manager/supervisor involved, will decide upon the appropriate action to resolve the situation.

16. LEVELS OF RISK GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW TEAM

**Level 1 – Negligible**

A. Insufficient information to determine if a threat was made and if threat was/is serious.

B. Reported threat-maker has no history of threats or inappropriate behavior.

C. The motives of the reporting person may be questionable.

**Level 2 – Low**

A. Comment was made and the recipient misconstrued it as a threat.

B. Not enough evidence to determine if threat was actually made.

C. Reported threat-maker has no apparent intent to harm and has no history of threats or inappropriate behavior.

D. Insufficient evidence to continue investigation.

**Level 3 – Moderate**

A. Threat was made and causes distress to others.

B. There is a reasonable belief of an intent to cause harm

C. Threat-maker denies or rationalizes actions.

D. No history of problems but immediate behavior is inappropriate or irrational.

E. Violates organizational policy, but no criminal code violation or need for hospitalization.

F. Threat-maker is taking medications for depression, etc.

**Level 4 – High**

A. Clear threat with intent to cause harm.

B. History of problems in the organization.

C. Violates organizational policy but no criminal code violation.

D. May be need for hospitalization.
E. Individual owns or has access to weapon(s).
F. Individual is on medication for depression, etc.

**Level 5 – Extreme**

A. Clear acting out.
B. Violation of criminal code and reason to arrest.
C. Weapon displayed or used.
D. Hospitalization clearly necessary.
E. Individual is on medication for depression, etc.

17. **GUIDELINES FOR THE INVESTIGATION**

Procedures are established for investigating potential as well as actual threats. These procedures include the following:

A. Coordinate the investigation with College officials and how it will be conducted.
B. Interview with the complainant.
C. Relevant actions documented.
D. Evidence gathered appropriately and properly.
E. If evidence supports a threat was made, the alleged offender is interviewed.
F. Consultation of the review team.

18. **REVIEW TEAM GUIDELINES FOR THE STUDENT WHO IS THREATENING OR VIOLENT**

According to the laws of the state, students can be charged with disorderly conduct, assault, etc., for acts of violence directed toward campus employees. Such prosecution will be warranted if physical confrontation or injury occurs as a result of violent behavior.

**Physical or verbal aggression toward employees by students will not be tolerated.** Students who demonstrate such behavior but stop short of violations of criminal law that warrant prosecution will be referred to the Vice President of Student Services. When found in violation of this policy by the Ad Hoc Committee on Discipline appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be imposed.

19. **EDUCATION, AWARENESS, & PREVENTION**

The Office of Human Resources and Campus Police Department recognize the need to provide employees throughout the College with information to raise the awareness about the issue of violence in the workplace, to provide employees examples of inappropriate behavior, and to inform employees of the procedures for reporting inappropriate behavior. These programs consist of the following:

A. Oral presentations regarding workplace violence concerns prepared and given to various campus groups and departments.
B. Videotapes on workplace violence may be checked out and are encouraged for use at staff meetings as well as the employee’s individual use.
C. Printed materials are developed, printed, and distributed to all employees on a yearly basis. The following information is included:

1) Statistics on workplace violence.
2) Types of campus workplace violence.
3) Profile of attackers.
4) Employee stress factors.
5) Red flags or warning signs.
6) How to report concerns or problems.
7) Conflict resolution behaviors.
8) Areas of high risk.
9) Domestic violence and how it spills into the workplace.
10) New employee packets.

Physical surveys where a trained crime prevention officer accompanies an individual to his or her work area to identify and discuss areas of concern or problem areas such as the arrangement of furniture or the blocking of exits. Escape routes and what to do if you cannot get out are discussed.

20. RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES

Personnel responsible for the workplace violence program at the college are as follows.

The Director of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer is responsible for coordinating with Chief of Campus Police in:

A. Directing the workplace violence program.
B. Investigating or assigning the investigation of reports of threats or incidents of workplace violence.
C. Notifying the Crisis Management Review team.
D. Keeping the college administration informed.
E. Directing and assigning the workplace violence education, awareness, and prevention plan.
F. Promoting the prevention of workplace violence by handing out crime prevention information and materials.

TBR Source: P-085: November 3, 1999 - TBR President's Meeting

VSCC Source: III:00:05: November 3, 2008, President's Cabinet; V:01:26: February 19, 2001, President; January 23, 2009, President's Cabinet