

# NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.

## POLICY 526

### HAZING PROHIBITION

#### POLICY MANAGEMENT

*Adopted: 09/1997*

*Reviewed/ Revised\*: 2/11\*, 11/12\*, 12/13\*, 3/19, 3/22, 2/25*

*Mandatory: Yes*

*Frequency: Every 3 years*

*Distribution: Handbook, Staff*

#### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school and are prohibited at all times.

#### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

- A. No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school shall plan, direct, encourage, aid or engage in hazing.
- B. No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school shall permit, condone or tolerate hazing.
- C. Apparent permission or consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- D. This policy applies to behavior that occurs on or off school property and during and after school hours.
- E. A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act.
- F. The school will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school who is found to have violated this policy.

#### **III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. "Hazing" means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose. The term hazing includes, but is not limited to:
  - 1. Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking or placing a harmful substance on the body.

2. Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, calisthenics or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
  3. Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, drug, tobacco product or any other food, liquid, or substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
  4. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school.
  5. Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves violation of state or federal law or of school district policies or regulations.
- B. "Student organization" means a group, club or organization having students as its primary members or participants. It includes grade levels, classes, teams, activities or particular school events. A student organization does not have to be an official school organization to come within the terms of this definition.

#### **IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES**

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of hazing or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school official designated by this policy.
- B. The administrator or designee is the person responsible for receiving reports of hazing at the building level. Any person may report hazing directly to the administrator or designee. If the complaint involves the administrator, the complaint shall be made or filed directly to the president of the board of directors.
- C. Teachers, administrators, volunteers, contractors and other employees of the school shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances or events which might include hazing. Any such person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall inform the building report taker immediately. School personnel who fail to inform the administrator of activities that may constitute hazing in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary action.
- D. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of hazing will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades or work assignments.
- E. Reports of hazing are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law. The school district will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school's legal obligations to

investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

## **V. SCHOOL**

- A. Upon receipt of a complaint or report of hazing, the school shall undertake or authorize an investigation by school officials or a third party designated by the school.
- B. The school may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, reporter, students, or others pending completion of an investigation of hazing.
- C. Upon completion of the investigation, the school will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. School action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, applicable statutory authority, including the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, school policies and regulations.
- D. The school is not authorized to disclose to a victim, private, educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the school district. School officials will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students involved in a hazing incident and the remedial action taken, to the extent permitted by law, based on a confirmed report.

## **VI. REPRISAL**

The school will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged hazing or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or against any person who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such hazing. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment, or intentional disparate treatment.

## **VII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY**

- A. Elements of this policy shall be referenced in the school's student and staff handbooks. A full copy of the policy can be found on the school's website or requested in the main office.
- B. The school will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 121A.031 (School Student Bullying Policy)  
Minn. Stat. § 121A.0311 (Notice of the Rights and Responsibilities of Students and Parents Under the Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act)  
Minn. Stat. § 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)  
Minn. Stat. § 121A.69 (Hazing Policy)

**Cross References:** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 403 (Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal of

School District Employees)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition Policy)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 525 (Violence Prevention [Applicable to Students and Staff])