

NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.

POLICY 501

SCHOOL WEAPONS

POLICY MANAGEMENT

Adopted: 8/1997

Reviewed/ Revised: 12/01*, 1/10*, 3/11*, 9/13*, 9/16*, 11/18*, 11/21*

Mandatory: Yes

Frequency: Every 3 years

Distribution: Not specified

[Note: School districts are required by statute to have a policy addressing these issues. ATTENTION: This policy incorporates certain provisions of the Minnesota Citizens' Personal Protection Act of 2003. That law was struck down by the Minnesota Court of Appeals. However, in the 2005 session, the Minnesota legislature reenacted this law effective retroactively and without interruption from April 28, 2003. The reenacted law is now in effect (often referred to as the "conceal and carry" law).]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assure a safe school environment for students, staff and the public.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

No student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use or distribute a weapon when in a school location except as provided in this policy. The school will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school employee, volunteer, or member of the public who violates this policy.

III. DEFINITION

A. "Weapon"

1. A "weapon" means any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use as capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; air guns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; nun chucks; throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace and other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.
2. No person shall possess, use or distribute any object, device or instrument having the appearance of a weapon and such objects, devices or instruments shall be treated as weapons including, but not limited to, weapons listed above which are broken or non-functional, look-alike guns; toy guns; and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon.
3. No person shall use articles designed for other purposes (i.e., lasers or laser pointers, belts, combs, pencils, files, scissors, etc.), to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

- B. "School Location" includes any school building or grounds, whether leased, rented, owned or controlled by the school, locations of school activities or trips, bus stops, school buses or school vehicles, school-contracted vehicles, the area of entrance or departure from school premises or events, all locations where school-related functions are conducted, and anywhere students are under the jurisdiction of the school.
- C. "Possession" means having a weapon on one's person or in an area subject to one's control in a school location.

IV. EXCEPTIONS

- A. A student who finds a weapon on the way to school or in a school location, or a student who discovers that he or she accidentally has a weapon in his or her possession, and takes the weapon immediately to the principal's office shall not be considered to possess a weapon. If it would be impractical or dangerous to take the weapon to the principal's office, a student shall not be considered to possess a weapon if he or she immediately turns the weapon over to an administrator or teacher or immediately notifies an administrator or teacher of the weapon's location.
- B. It shall not be a violation of this policy if a non-student or student, where specified, falls within one of the following categories:
 - 1. Active licensed police officer;
 - 2. Military personnel, or students or nonstudents participating in military training, who are on duty performing official duties;
 - 3. Persons authorized to carry a pistol under Minn. Stat. § 624.714 while in a motor vehicle or outside of a motor vehicle for the purpose of directly placing a firearm in, or retrieving it from, the trunk or rear area of the vehicle;
 - 4. Persons who keep or store in a motor vehicle pistols in accordance with Minn. Stat. §§ 624.714 or 624.715 or other firearms in accordance with § 97B.045;
 - a. Section 624.714 specifies procedures and standards for obtaining pistol permits and penalties for the failure to do so. Section 624.715 defines an exception to the pistol permit requirements for "antique firearms which are carried or possessed as curiosities or for their historical significance or value."
 - b. Section 97B.045 generally provides that a firearm may not be transported in a motor vehicle unless it is (1) unloaded and in a gun case without any portion of the firearm exposed; or (2) unloaded and in the closed trunk; or (3) a handgun carried in compliance with §§ 624.714 and 624.715.
 - 5. Firearm safety or marksmanship courses or activities for students or nonstudents conducted on school property;
 - 6. Possession of dangerous weapons, BB guns, or replica firearms by a ceremonial color guard;
 - 7. A gun or knife show held on school property;
 - 8. Possession of dangerous weapons, BB guns, or replica firearms with written permission of the administrator or designee having general control and supervision of the school; or
 - 9. Persons who are on unimproved property owned or leased by a school unless the person knows that a student is currently present on the land for a school-related

activity.

C. Policy Application to Instructional Equipment/Tools.

While the school does not allow the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students or non-students, such a position is not meant to interfere with instruction or the use of appropriate equipment and tools by students or non-students. Such equipment and tools, when properly possessed, used and stored, shall not be considered in violation of the rule against the possession, use or distribution of weapons. However, when authorized instructional and work equipment and tools are used in a potentially dangerous or threatening manner, such possession and use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

D. Firearms in School Parking Lots and Parking Facilities

A school may not prohibit the lawful carry or possession of firearms in a school parking lot or parking facility. For purposes of this policy, the “lawful” carry or possession of a firearm in a school parking lot or parking facility is specifically limited to nonstudent permit-holders authorized under Minn. Stat. § 624.714 to carry a pistol in the interior of a vehicle or outside the motor vehicle for the purpose of directly placing a firearm in, or retrieving it from, the trunk or rear area of the vehicle. Any possession or carry of a firearm beyond the immediate vicinity of a permit-holder’s vehicle shall constitute a violation of this policy.

V. **CONSEQUENCES FOR STUDENT WEAPON POSSESSION / USE / DISTRIBUTION**

A. The school does not allow the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students. Consequently, the consequence for students possessing, using or distributing weapons may include:

1. Immediate out-of-school suspension;
2. Confiscation of the weapon;
3. Immediate notification of police;
4. Parent or guardian notification; and
5. Recommendation to the superintendent of dismissal for a period of time not to exceed one year.

B. Pursuant to Minnesota law, a student who brings a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school will be expelled for at least one year. The school board may modify this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

C. Administrative Discretion

While the school takes a “Zero Tolerance” position on the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students, the principal may use discretion in determining whether, under the circumstances, a course of action other than the consequences specified above is warranted. If so, other appropriate action may be taken, including consideration of a recommendation for lesser discipline.

VI. CONSEQUENCES FOR WEAPON POSSESSION / USE / DISTRIBUTION BY NONSTUDENTS

A. Employees.

1. An employee who violates the terms of this policy is subject to disciplinary action, including non-renewal, suspension, or discharge as deemed appropriate by the school board.
2. Sanctions against employees, including non-renewal, suspension, or discharge shall be pursuant to and in accordance with applicable statutory authority, collective bargaining agreements, and school policies.
3. When an employee violates the weapons policy, law enforcement may be notified, as appropriate.

B. Other Non-students.

1. Any member of the public who violates this policy shall be informed of the policy and asked to leave the school location. Depending on the circumstances, the person may be barred from future entry to school locations. In addition, if the person is a student in another school district, that school district may be contacted concerning the policy violation.
2. If appropriate, law enforcement will be notified of the policy violation by the member of the public and may be asked to provide an escort to remove the member of the public from the school location.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 97B.045 (Transportation of Firearms)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.05 (Referral to Police)
Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.44 (Expulsion for Possession of Firearm)
Minn. Stat. § 609.02, Subd. 6 (Definition of Dangerous Weapon)
Minn. Stat. § 609.605 (Trespass)
Minn. Stat. § 609.66 (Dangerous Weapons)
Minn. Stat. § 624.714 (Carrying of Weapons without Permit; Penalties)
Minn. Stat. § 624.715 (Exemptions; Antiques and Ornaments)
18 U.S.C. § 921 (Definition of Firearm)
In re C.R.M. 611 N.W.2d 802 (Minn. 2000)

Cross References:

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 403 (Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal of School District Employees)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 525 (Violence Prevention)