

# NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.

## POLICY 413

### HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

#### POLICY MANAGEMENT

*Adopted: 8/1997*

*Reviewed/ Revised\*: 1/11\*, 10/11\*, 10/12\*, 10/13\*, 11/14\*, 10/15\*, 11/16\*, 11/17, 3/19\*, 2/20, 3/21, 2/22,2/23,2/24,2/25, 2/26\**

*Mandatory: Yes*

*Frequency: Annually*

*Distribution: Website, Student Handbook, Staff Handbook & Office*

#### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability.

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

- A. The policy of the school is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability. The school prohibits any form of harassment or violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability.
- B. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, teacher, principal or other school personnel harasses a student, teacher, principal or other school personnel or group of students, teachers, principal, or other school personnel through conduct or communication based on a person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability as defined by this policy. (For purposes of this policy, school personnel include the board of directors, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors or persons subject to the supervision and control of the school.)

- C. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, teacher, principal or other school personnel inflicts, threatens to inflict, or attempts to inflict violence upon any student, teacher, principal or other school personnel or group of students, teachers, principal, or other school personnel based on a person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability.
- D. The school will act to investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment or violence based on a person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability, and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, principal or other school personnel who is found to have violated this policy.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Assault" is:
  - 1. an act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death;
  - 2. the intentional infliction of or attempt to inflict bodily harm upon another; or
  - 3. the threat to do bodily harm to another with present ability to carry out the threat.
- B. "Harassment" prohibited by this policy consists of physical or verbal conduct, including, but not limited to, electronic communications, relating to an individual's or group of individuals' race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability when the conduct:
  - 1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment;
  - 2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or
  - 3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.
- C. "Immediately" means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.
- D. Protected Classifications: Definitions
  - 1. "Disability" means any condition or characteristic that renders a person a disabled person. A disabled person is any person who:

- a. has a physical, sensory, or mental impairment which materially limits one or more major life activities;
    - b. has a record of such an impairment;
    - c. is regarded as having such an impairment;
    - d. Has an impairment that is episodic or in remission and would materially limit a major life activity when active.
  - 2. “Familial status” means the condition of one or more minors having legal status or custody with:
    - a. their minor’s parent or parents of the minor’s legal guardian; or
    - b. the designee of the parent or parents or guardian with the written permission of the parent or parents or guardian or guardians. Familial status also means residing with and caring for one or more individuals who lack the ability to meet essential requirements for physical health, safety, or self-care because the individual or individuals are unable to receive and evaluate information or make or communicate decisions. The protections afforded against harassment on the basis of family status apply to any person who is pregnant or is in the process of securing legal custody of an individual who has not attained the age of majority.
  - 3. “Marital status” means whether a person is single, married, remarried, divorced, separated, or a surviving spouse and, in employment cases, includes protection against harassment on the basis of the identity, situation, actions, or beliefs of a spouse or former spouse.
  - 4. “National origin” means the place of birth of an individual or of any of the individual’s lineal ancestors.
  - 5. “Sex” includes, but is not limited to, pregnancy, childbirth, and disabilities related to pregnancy or childbirth.
  - 6. “Sexual orientation” means having or being perceived as having an emotional, physical, or sexual attachment to another person without regard to the sex of that person or having or being perceived as having an orientation for such attachment, or having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one’s biological maleness or femaleness. “Sexual orientation” does not include a physical or sexual attachment to children by an adult.
  - 7. “Status with regard to public assistance” means the condition of being a recipient of federal, state, or local assistance, including medical assistance, or of being a tenant receiving federal, state, or local subsidies, including rental assistance or rent supplements.
- E. “Remedial response” means a measure to stop and correct acts of harassment or violence, prevent acts of harassment or violence from recurring, and protect, support, and intervene on behalf of a student who is the target or victim of acts of

harassment or violence.

F. Sexual Harassment; Definition.

1. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:
  - a. submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining or retaining employment, or of obtaining an education; or
  - b. submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment or education; or
  - c. that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or education, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive employment or educational environment.
2. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to:
  - a. unwelcome verbal harassment or abuse;
  - b. unwelcome pressure for sexual activity;
  - c. unwelcome, sexually motivated or inappropriate patting, pinching or physical contact, other than necessary restraint of student(s) by teachers, principal or other school personnel to avoid physical harm to persons or property;
  - d. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment or educational status;
  - e. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment or educational status; or
  - f. unwelcome behavior or words directed at an individual because of sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression.

G. Sexual Violence; Definition.

1. Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression or force or the threat thereof which involves the touching of another's intimate parts, or forcing a person to touch any person's intimate parts. Intimate parts, as defined in Minn. Stat. ' 609.341, includes the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks or breast, as well as the clothing covering these areas.
2. Sexual violence may include, but is not limited to:
  - a. touching, patting, grabbing, or pinching another person's intimate parts, whether that person is of the same sex or the opposite sex;
  - b. coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force the touching of anyone's intimate parts;

- c. coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force sexual intercourse or a sexual act on another; or
- d. threatening to force or coerce sexual acts, including the touching of intimate parts or intercourse, on another.

H. Violence: Definition.

Violence prohibited by this policy is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another or group of individuals because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability.

#### IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the target or victim of harassment or violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability by a student, teacher, principal or other school personnel , or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute harassment or violence prohibited by this policy toward a student, teacher, principal or other school personnel or group of students, teachers, principal, or other school personnel should report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school official designated by this policy. A person may report conduct which may constitute harassment or violence anonymously. However, the school may not rely solely on an anonymous report to determine discipline or other remedial responses. The school encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from the principal of the building or available from the school office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting harassment or violence directly to the school principal.
- B. In the School Building. The building principal or the principal's designee is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy at the building level. Any adult who receives a report of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy shall inform the principal immediately. If the complaint involves the principal, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the president of the board of directors by the reporting party or complainant. The building report taker shall ensure that this policy and its procedures, practice, consequences, and sanctions are fairly and fully implemented and shall serve as a primary contact on policy and procedural matters.
- C. A teacher, school principal, volunteer, contractor, or other school employee shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include acts of harassment or violence. Any such person who witnesses, observes, receives a report of, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute harassment or violence shall make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the harassment or violence and shall inform the building report takers immediately. School personnel who fail to inform the building report taker of conduct that may

constitute harassment or violence or who fail to make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the harassment or violence in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary action.

- D. Upon receipt of a report, the report taker must notify the principal or designee immediately, without screening or investigating the report. The report taker may request, but may not insist upon, a written complaint. A written statement of the facts alleged will be forwarded as soon as practicable by the report taker to the principal. If the report was given verbally, the report taker shall personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to the principal. Failure to forward any harassment or violence report or complaint as provided herein may result in disciplinary action against the report taker.
- E. In the School. The board of directors hereby designates the principal to receive reports or complaints of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy. If the complaint involves the principal, the complaint shall be filed directly to the president of the board of directors.
- F. The school shall conspicuously post the name of the principal, who is responsible for receiving all reports of harassment or violence, including mailing addresses and telephone numbers.
- G. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, work assignments, or education or work environment.
- H. Use of formal reporting forms is not mandatory.
- I. Reports of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy 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 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.
- J. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reported, or a witness of violence or harassment is prohibited.
- K. False accusations or reports of violence or harassment against another person are prohibited.
- L. A person who engages in an act of violence or harassment, reprisal, retaliation, or false reporting of violence or harassment, or permits, condones, or tolerates violence or harassment shall be subject to discipline or other remedial responses for that act in accordance with the school's policies and procedures.
- M. Consequences for students who commit, or are party to, prohibited acts of violence or harassment or who engage in reprisal or intentional false reporting may range from remedial responses or positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.
- N. Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate violence or

harassment or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of violence or harassment may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge.

- O. Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of violence or harassment may include, but not limited to, exclusion from school property and events and/or termination of services and/or contracts.

## **V. INVESTIGATION**

- A. By authority of the school, the principal, within three (3) days of the receipt of a report or complaint alleging harassment or violence prohibited by this policy, shall undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by school officials or by a third party designated by the school.
- B. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.
- C. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the school should consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.
- D. In addition, the school may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the target or victim, the complainant, students, teachers, principal or other school personnel pending completion of an investigation of alleged harassment or violence prohibited by this policy.
- E. The alleged perpetrator of the act(s) of harassment or violence shall be allowed the opportunity to present a defense during the investigation or prior to the imposition of discipline or other remedial responses.
- F. The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable. If the complaint involves the principal, the report may be filed directly with the chair of the board of directors. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy.

## **VI. ACTION**

- A. Upon completion of an investigation that determines a violation of this policy has occurred, the school takes 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 try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. School action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of

applicable staff assignments, Minnesota and federal law and applicable school policies and regulations.

- B. 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. School officials will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) or targets or victims of harassment or violence and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of alleged perpetrators of harassment or violence who have been involved in a reported and confirmed harassment or violence incident of the remedial or disciplinary action taken, to the extent permitted by law.
- C. In order to prevent or respond to acts of harassment or violence committed by or directed against a child with a disability, the school district shall, where determined appropriate by the child's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 team, allow the child's IEP or Section 504 plan to be drafted to address the skills and proficiencies the child needs as a result of the child's disability to allow the child to respond to or not engage in acts of harassment or violence.

#### **VII. RETALIATION OR REPRISAL**

The school will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, principal or other school personnel who commits an act of reprisal or who retaliates against any person who asserts, alleges, or makes a good faith report of alleged harassment or violence prohibited by this policy who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation of retaliation or alleged harassment or violence, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment or violence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations and to appropriately discipline the individual(s) who engages in harassment or violence. Remedial responses to the harassment or violence shall be tailored to the particular incident and nature of the conduct.

#### **VIII. RIGHT TO ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES.**

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include filing charges with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, initiating civil action or seeking redress under state criminal statutes and/or federal law.

#### **IX. HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE AS ABUSE**

- A. Under certain circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under Minnesota law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under Minn. Stat. ' 626.556 may be applicable.
- B. Nothing in this policy will prohibit the school from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence or abuse.

#### **X. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND TRAINING**

- A. This policy shall be widely disseminated and will be accessible to all students, their

- families, and staff members.
- B. This policy shall be given to each school employee and independent contractor who regularly interacts with students at the time of initial employment contract.
  - C. Elements of this policy shall appear in the student handbook. A full copy of the policy can be found on the school's website or requested in the main office.
  - D. The school will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.
  - E. The school may implement violence prevention and character development education programs to prevent and reduce policy violations. Such programs may offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as attentiveness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self-discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, peacemaking, resourcefulness, and/or sexual abuse prevention.
  - F. This policy shall be reviewed at least annually for compliance with state and federal law.

## XI. POLICY MANAGEMENT

- A. Mandatory: Yes
- B. Frequency: Annual
- C. Distribution: Handbook (Y)(portions), Web or Office & Staff

**Legal References:**

- Minn. Stat. § 120B.232 (Character Development Education)
- Minn. Stat. § 120B.234 (Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Education)
- Minn. Stat. § 121A.03, Subd. 2 (Sexual, Religious, and Racial Harassment and Violence Policy)
- Minn. Stat. § 121A.031 (School Student Bullying Policy)
- Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (Minnesota Human Rights Act)
- Minn. Stat. § 609.341 (Definitions)
- Minn. Stat. § 626.556 *et seq.* (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)
- 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681-1688 (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972)
- 29 U.S.C. § 621 *et seq.* (Age Discrimination in Employment Act)
- 29 U.S.C. § 794 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, § 504)
- 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (Civil Action for Deprivation of Rights)
- 42 U.S.C. § 2000d *et seq.* (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
- 42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.* (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act)
- 42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.* (Americans with Disabilities Act)

**Cross References:**

- MSBA/MASA Model Policy 102 (Equal Educational Opportunity)
- MSBA/MASA Model Policy 401 (Equal Employment Opportunity)
- MSBA/MASA Model Policy 402 (Disability Nondiscrimination Policy)
- MSBA/MASA Model Policy 403 (Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal of School District Employees)
- MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406 (Public and Private Personnel Data)
- MSBA/MASA Model Policy 414 (Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse)
- MSBA/MASA Model Policy 415 (Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults)
- MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition Policy)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 521 (Student Disability Nondiscrimination)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 522 (Student Sex Nondiscrimination)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 524 (Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 525 (Violence Prevention)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 526 (Hazing Prohibition)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 528 (Student Parental, Family, and Marital Status  
Nondiscrimination)

**(Report Form attached)**

**NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.**  
**POLICY 413 HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE REPORT FORM**

General Statement of Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Violence

New Heights School, Inc. maintains a firm policy prohibiting all forms of discrimination. Harassment or violence against students or employees or groups of students or employees on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability is strictly prohibited. All persons are to be treated with respect and dignity. Harassment or violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability by any pupil, teacher, principal, or other school personnel, which create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Complainant \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Alleged Incident(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Basis of Alleged Harassment/Violence - circle as appropriate: race \ color \ creed \ religion \ national origin \ sex \ age \ marital status \ familial status \ status with regard to public assistance \ sexual orientation , including gender identity or expression \ disability

Name of person you believe harassed or was violent toward you or another person or group.  
\_\_\_\_\_

If the alleged harassment or violence was toward another person or group, identify that person or group.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the incident(s) as clearly as possible, including such things as: what force, if any, was used; any verbal statements (i.e., threats, requests, demands, etc.); what, if any, physical contact was involved; etc. (Attach additional pages if necessary.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Where and when did the incident(s) occur? \_\_\_\_\_

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List any witnesses that were present \_\_\_\_\_

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This complaint is filed based on my honest belief that \_\_\_\_\_ has harassed or has been violent to me or to another person or group. I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Complainant Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Received by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)