

**413 DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination, 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 district is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination, 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 district 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.

[Note: The Minnesota Human Rights Act defines “sexual orientation” to include “having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one’s biological maleness or femaleness.” Minn. Stat. § 363A.03, Subd. 44]

B. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel harasses a student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel or group of students, teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel through conduct or communication based on a 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 district personnel includes school board members, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, or persons subject to the supervision and control of the district.)

C. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel inflicts, threatens to inflict, or attempts to inflict violence upon any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel or group of students, teachers, administrators, or other school district 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 district will act to investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of discrimination, 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, administrator, or other school district personnel found to have violated this policy.
- E. Because there are multiple, overlapping laws governing the school district's response to allegations of sexual harassment, all allegations of sexual harassment are subject to Policy 522.

### 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.

As used in these procedures, the term "harassment" may include the use of derogatory language (including racial or ethnic epithets), intimidation, and threats, unwanted physical contact and/or physical violence, and the use of derogatory language and images in graffiti, pictures or drawings, notes, e-mails, postings on internet and social networking sites and/or phone messages.

C. “Immediately” means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 48 hours.

D. Protected Classifications; Definitions

1. “Disability” means with respect to an individual who:
  - a. has a physical, sensory, or mental impairment that materially limits one or more major life activities of such individual;
  - b. has a record of such an impairment; or
  - c. is regarded as having such an impairment.
2. “Familial status” means the condition of one or more minors being domiciled with:
  - a. their parent or parents or 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. The protections afforded against harassment or discrimination 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 or discrimination 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. 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 discrimination, 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, administrator, or other school district personnel, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute harassment or violence prohibited by this policy toward a student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel or group of students, teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel should report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district official designated by this policy. A person may report conduct that may constitute discrimination, harassment or violence anonymously. However, the school district may not rely solely on an anonymous report to determine discipline or other remedial responses.

B. The school district encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from the principal or building supervisor of each building or available from the school district office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well.

C. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting harassment or violence directly to a school district human rights officer or to the superintendent. If the complaint involves the building report taker, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer by the reporting party or complainant.

D. In Each School Building. The building principal, the principal’s designee, or the building supervisor (hereinafter the “building report taker”) is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy at the building level. Any adult school district personnel who receives a report of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy shall inform the building report taker immediately. If the complaint involves the building report taker, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer by the reporting party or complainant. The building report taker shall ensure that this policy and its procedures, practices, consequences, and sanctions are fairly and fully

implemented and shall serve as a primary contact on policy and procedural matters.

- E. A teacher, school administrator, 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 taker immediately. School district 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.
- F. **Upon receipt of a report regarding adult behavior**, the building report taker must notify the School District Human Rights Officer, without screening or investigating the report, using the Discrimination, Harassment and Violence Report Form. The building report taker may request, but may not insist upon, a written complaint. A Discrimination, Harassment and Violence Report Form will be forwarded by the building report taker to the Human Rights Officer within five (5) days of receiving a report.

**Upon receipt of a report regarding student behavior**, the building report taker will document the report in the student discipline reporting system within five (5) days of receiving a report. The building report taker shall ensure that this policy and its procedures are followed, that the report is evaluated, investigated and managed consistent with the district's code of conduct and the school's disciplinary processes, and that consequences, sanctions, and remedial responses are fairly and fully implemented. The building report taker shall serve as a primary contact for students and families on school policies, procedures and disciplinary matters related to complaints of student behavior.

Failure to forward any harassment or violence report or complaint as provided herein, or to respond to a report or complaint consistent with school district policies, the code of conduct and/or discipline policies and procedures, may result in disciplinary action against the building report taker.

- G. In the District. The school board hereby designates the Executive Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations as the school district human rights officer(s) to receive reports or complaints of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy. If the complaint involves a human rights officer, the complaint shall be filed directly with the superintendent.
- H. The school district shall conspicuously post the name of the human rights officer(s), including mailing addresses and telephone numbers.
- I. 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 educational or work environment.

- J. Use of formal reporting forms is not mandatory.
- K. 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.
- L. 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 district's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with any discovery or disclosure obligations.
- M. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of violence or harassment is prohibited.
- N. False accusations or reports of violence or harassment against another person are prohibited.
- O. 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 district's policies and procedures.

Consequences for students who commit, or are a 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.

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.

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

## **V. INVESTIGATION**

- A. By authority of the school district, the human rights officer, within three (3) days of the receipt of a report or complaint alleging discrimination, harassment or violence prohibited by this policy, shall undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by school district officials or by a third party designated by the school district. Complaints about student behavior will typically be investigated by the building report taker consistent with the code of conduct and discipline procedures of the school. All documentation of student conduct in violation of this policy will be maintained in the school's discipline reporting system. Investigation of adult behavior may be handled at the building level or the district level depending on the circumstances of the complaint, and will be documented by a written report or on the Discrimination Harassment Administrative Action Form and maintained by the Human Rights Officer.

- 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 district 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 district may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the target or victim, the complainant, and students, teachers, administrators, or other school district 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. The school district human rights officer shall make a written report to the superintendent upon completion of the investigation. If the complaint involves the superintendent, the report may be filed directly with the school board. 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. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION**

- A. Upon completion of an investigation that determines a violation of this policy has occurred, the school district 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 try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. Remedial responses to the harassment or violence shall be tailored to the particular incident and nature of the conduct. School district action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, Minnesota and federal law, and applicable school district policies and regulations.
- B. The school district 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 targets or victims and alleged perpetrators of the harassment or violence, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of 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 to engage in acts of harassment or violence.

## **VII. RETALIATION OR REPRISAL**

The school district will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district 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 engaged in the 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 or another state or federal agency, 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 Minnesota Statutes § 260E may be applicable.
- B. Nothing in this policy will prohibit the school district from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence, or abuse.

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

- A. This policy shall be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to students and staff members.
- B. This policy shall be given to each school district employee and independent contractor who regularly interacts with students at the time of initial employment with the school district.

- C. This policy shall appear in the student handbook.
- D. The school district will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.
- E. The school district 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, and resourcefulness.
- F. This policy shall be reviewed at least annually for compliance with state and federal law.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 120B.232 (Character Development Education)  
 Minn. Stat. § 120B.234 (Character Sex 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. §260E (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 (Section 504 of the 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:** Board Policy 102 (Equal Educational Opportunity)  
 Board Policy 401 (Equal Employment Opportunity)  
 Board Policy 402 (Disability Nondiscrimination Policy)  
 Board Policy 403 (Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal of School District Employees)  
 Board Policy 406 (Public and Private Personnel Data)  
 Board Policy 414 (Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse)  
 Board Policy 415 (Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults)  
 Board Policy 506 (Student Discipline)  
 Board Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition Policy)  
 Board Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)  
 Board Policy 521 (Student Disability Nondiscrimination)  
 Board Policy 522 (Sex Nondiscrimination Policy – Title IX)  
 Board Policy 524 (Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy)  
 Board Policy 525 (Violence Prevention)  
 Board Policy 526 (Hazing Prohibition)

Board Policy 528 (Student Parental, Family, and Marital Status  
Nondiscrimination)

**BOARD POLICY 413**  
**St. Cloud Area School District 742**  
**St. Cloud, Minnesota**

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