

Adopted: 5.28.15  
Revised: 3.23.15

*Booth and Lavorato Policy #5.4.1*  
*Orig. 2013*  
*Beacon Academy Dist. #4124*

**Beacon Academy**  
**POLICY #539**  
**PROHIBITION AGAINST UNFAIR DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES IN**  
**EDUCATION AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish definitions, reporting processes, grievance and investigation procedures regarding claims of unfair discriminatory practices in education.

**II. POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of Beacon Academy to fully comply with all state and federal laws prohibiting unfair discriminatory practices in education.

**III. PROHIBITIONS**

- A. It shall be a violation of this policy for any Beacon Academy student, employee or agent to discriminate against, or engage in unlawful discriminatory conduct with regard to a Beacon Academy student through conduct (e.g., physical, oral, graphic or written) that is based upon that student's race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, disability, status with regard to public assistance, marital status or age [hereinafter referred to as "protected class"] as defined by this policy.
- B. Beacon Academy will investigate all complaints, formal or informal, oral or written, of discrimination or unlawful discriminatory conduct based upon a student's membership in a protected class.

**IV. DEFINITIONS**

- A. Disability. "Disability" means any condition or characteristic that renders a person a disabled person. A disabled person is any person who (1) has a physical, sensory, or mental impairment which materially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.
- B. Discriminate. The term "discriminate" includes segregate or separate and, for purposes of discrimination based on sex, it includes sexual harassment. It also includes:

1. An “unfair discriminatory practice”, as described in Minn. Stat. §§363A.13, 363A.14 and 363A.15;
  2. Any violation of federal laws prohibiting discrimination in education (including “Title IX”; “Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973” and the “Americans with Disabilities Act”).
- C. National Origin. “National origin” means the place of birth of an individual or of any of the individual's lineal ancestors.
- D. Sexual Harassment. “Sexual harassment” includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:
1. Submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining education;
  2. Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's education;
  3. That conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment or education or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
- E. Sexual Orientation. “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.

## **V. APPLICABILITY OF THIS POLICY**

- A. The antidiscrimination laws and this policy apply to all of the academic and nonacademic (e.g. athletic, and extracurricular) programs of Beacon Academy, whether conducted in school facilities or elsewhere.
- B. For purposes of this policy, any student who is discriminated against, including being subjected to violence, by peers or Beacon Academy employees or agents based upon that student’s membership in a protected class, may file a complaint as described more fully in section VI below.
- C. For purposes of this policy, any Beacon Academy student who is harassed or discriminated against, including being subjected to violence by students or Beacon Academy employees based upon that student’s membership in a protected class may file a complaint as described more fully in section IV below.

## **VI. COMPLIANCE OFFICER DESIGNATIONS, REPORTING PROCEDURES**

A. Title IX Coordinator.

Pursuant to Title IX, Beacon Academy designates the Administrator to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under the regulations, including Title IX complaint investigation (Title IX Coordinator) and Section 504 compliance.

B. Human Rights Officer Designation.

1. The Board of Beacon Academy hereby designates Administration and the Human Resources Coordinator as the school's human rights officers to receive reports or complaints of discrimination, harassment or violence based upon a student's membership in a protected class.
2. If the complaint involves any of the designated human rights officers, the complaint will be filed directly with any other human rights officer.

C. Reporting Procedures

For purposes of meeting state and federal reporting requirements, the following reporting procedure will be made available for students and staff who wish to report an incident(s) that may involve discrimination or unlawful discriminatory conduct, based upon actual or perceived sex/gender status, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance or marital status and age.

1. Any individual may make an oral or written report regarding alleged discrimination against a student to any staff supervisor or the Administrator, who must then submit the oral or written complaint/report to a human rights officer without screening or investigating the credibility of the report. If a human rights officer is not available on the date of the report, or if a human rights officer is the subject of the complaint, then the school official receiving the report must forward the oral or written report/complaint directly to a human rights officer.
  2. If the report was given orally, an Administrator will personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to a human rights officer.
  3. If the school official or an Administrator fails to forward any harassment or violence report or complaint (written or oral) to a human rights officer within 24 hours, that individual will be subject to disciplinary action.
- D. A human rights officer may request, but not insist, upon a written complaint. Alternative means of filing a complaint, such as through a personal interview or by tape recording, will be made available upon request for qualified persons with a disability.

- E. The human rights officers and board chair contact information will be made available in the Student Handbook and on the school's website.

## **VII. INVESTIGATION**

- A. Upon receipt of a complaint alleging discrimination, harassment or violence toward a student, a human rights officer will promptly undertake an investigation if deemed appropriate. The investigation will be completed within 30 calendar days from receipt of the complaint, unless impractical.
- 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, Beacon Academy will consider the facts and the surrounding circumstances, such as the nature of the behavior, past incidents or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incident occurred.
- D. Beacon Academy may take immediate steps to protect the parties involved in the complaint process, pending completion of an investigation of alleged unlawful discrimination of an employee.
- E. Upon completion of the preliminary investigation, a draft report will be made to the human rights officer team. If the complaint involves a human rights officer or an Administrator, the draft report must be filed directly with the board chair. The draft report will include the facts, a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated and whether a violation of this policy has occurred, as well as a description of any proposed resolution which may include alternate dispute resolution. The human rights team, or Board Chair if the complaint is against an Administrator, will make a final determination regarding whether or not the complaint is substantiated.
- F. Upon completion of the investigation and upon determination of substantiation by an Administrator, a human rights officer will inform the complainant/reporter of his or her right to review the written report at the school building where the complainant/reporter is employed in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.
- G. Upon completion of the investigation and upon determination of substantiation by an Administrator or Board Chair, if the complainant/reporter is a student, a human rights officer will inform the parent/guardian of his or her right to review the written report at the school building where the student reporter is enrolled in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

H. Beacon Academy will comply with federal and state law pertaining to retention of records.

### **VIII. APPEAL**

If the grievance has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant/reporter, s/he may appeal to the Board Chair within ten (10) school days of receipt of the findings of the investigation. The Board Chair will conduct a review of the appeal and, within ten (10) school days of receipt of the appeal, will affirm, reverse, or modify the findings of the report. The decision of the Board Chair is final, and action will occur as addressed in IX below.

### **IX. ACTION BASED ON FINDINGS**

A. Upon conclusion of the investigation and receipt of the findings, the school will take appropriate and effective action. If it is determined that a violation of this policy has occurred, such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. Actions may also include alternate dispute resolution, including restorative justice programs, school or district wide training, counseling, and class transfer. Any action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable contracts, state and federal law, and school policies.

B. The result of the school's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant by the school in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

### **X. REPRISAL**

Beacon Academy will take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged unlawful discrimination toward an employee or student or any person who testifies, assists, participates in an investigation or hearing related to alleged unlawful discrimination covered by this policy. Reprisal also includes retaliation against a student or district employee who associates with a person or group or persons who members of a protected class. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation or harassment. Reprisal is also prohibited based upon a request for a religious or disability accommodation.

### **XI. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

If there is a conflict of interest with respect to any party affected by this policy, appropriate accommodations will be made, such as, but not limited to, appointing or contracting with a neutral third party investigator to conduct the investigation, or recusal from the process by the person for whom a conflict or potential conflict of interest exists.

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

- A. This policy will be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to students and staff members.
- B. This policy will be given to each Beacon Academy student at the beginning of each school year, and to each employee and independent contractor at the time of entering into the person's employment contract.
- C. This policy will be included in the employee handbook and the school's student handbook on school policies.
- D. The school has developed the following process for discussing the school's harassment and violence policy with students and school employees:
  - 1. This policy will be reviewed with employees at the time of their hiring and as part of any staff training regarding discrimination.
  - 2. This policy will be reviewed with students at the beginning of the school year or as needed with students who enroll after the start of the school year.
- E. The Beacon Academy Board will review this policy periodically for compliance with state and federal law.
- F. Beacon Academy will post this policy on its website and ensure that it is easily accessible to view and download.

## **XIII. 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 agencies below, filing a report with a law enforcement agency, or initiating action in state or federal court. For claims of unlawful discrimination/harassment:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights  
Freeman Building  
625 Robert Street North  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
toll free: 800.657.3704  
tty: 651.296.1283  
fax: 651.296.9042  
[www.humanrights.state.mn.us](http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us)

U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil rights, Region V  
500 W. Madison Street- Suite 1475  
Chicago IL 60661

Tel: 312.730.1560  
TDD: 312.730.1609

***Legal References:*** Minn. Stat. §121A.03, Subd. 2 (Sexual, Religious and Racial Harassment and Violence Policy)  
Minn. Stat. §363A (Minnesota Human Rights Act)  
42 U.S.C. §2000e *et seq.* (Title IX of the Civil Rights Act)  
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act  
Americans with Disabilities Act