



HEARTLAND LAKES COMMUNITY SCHOOL EXISTS TO EMPOWER SCHOLARS TO:
 BRAVELY LIVE THEIR TRUTH,
 TO BECOME WISE STEWARDS OF THE LAND AND RESOURCES
 AND TO IGNITE LASTING CURIOSITY THAT LEADS TO POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR SCHOOL, THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND THEMSELVES.

Policy 522 Sex Nondiscrimination (Title IX)

Adoption:	March 25, 2024
Revision History	
Last Board Review: March 25, 2024	
Next Board Review: March 2025	
Review Frequency: Annually (per Policy 208)	

I. PURPOSE

Students are protected from discrimination on the basis of sex pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Minnesota Human Rights Act. The purpose of this policy is to provide equal educational opportunity for all students and to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A.** Heartland Lakes Community School (HLCS) provides equal educational opportunity for all students, and does not discriminate on the basis of sex. No student will be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity operated by HLCS on the basis of sex, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- B.** It is the responsibility of every HLCS employee to comply with this policy.
- C.** The school board hereby designates the Director, as its Title IX coordinator. This employee coordinates HLCS's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX.
- D.** Any student, parent or guardian having questions regarding the application of Title IX and its regulations and/or this policy should discuss them with the Title IX coordinator. Questions relating solely to Title IX and its regulations may be referred to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education. In the absence of a specific designee, an inquiry or complaint should be referred to the School Board Chair.

III. REPORTING GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- A.** Any student who believes they have been the victim of sex discrimination by a teacher, administrator or other HLCS personnel, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute unlawful sex discrimination toward a student should report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate HLCS official designated by this policy or may file a grievance. HLCS encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from the HLCS office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting unlawful sex discrimination toward a student directly to HLCS's human rights officer.
- B.** Upon receipt of a report or grievance, the employee must notify the human rights officer immediately, without screening or investigating the report. The human rights officer 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 employee to the human rights officer. If the report was given verbally, the employee should personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to the human rights officer. Failure to forward any report or complaint of unlawful sex discrimination toward a student as provided herein may result in disciplinary action against the employee. If the complaint involves the human rights officer, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the School Board Chair by the reporting party or complainant.
- C.** The school board hereby designates the Director as HLCS's human rights officer to receive reports, complaints or grievances of unlawful sex discrimination toward a student. If the complaint involves the human rights officer, the complaint shall be filed directly to the Director.
- D.** HLCS shall conspicuously post the name of the Title IX coordinator and human rights officer(s), including office mailing addresses and telephone numbers.
- E.** Submission of a good faith complaint, grievance or report of unlawful sex discrimination toward a student will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades or work assignments.
- F.** Use of formal reporting forms is not mandatory.
- G.** HLCS will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with HLCS's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

IV. INVESTIGATION

- A.** By authority of HLCS, the human rights officer, upon receipt of a report, complaint or grievance alleging unlawful sex discrimination toward a student shall promptly undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by HLCS officials or by a third party designated by HLCS.

- 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, HLCS 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, HLCS may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, pupils, teachers, administrators or other school personnel pending completion of an investigation of alleged unlawful sex discrimination toward a student.
- E.** The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable. HLCS's human rights officer shall make a written report to the School Board upon completion of the investigation. If the complaint involves the human rights officer, the report may be filed directly with the Director. 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.

V. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

- A.** Upon conclusion of the investigation and receipt of a report, HLCS will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. HLCS action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable Minnesota and federal law and HLCS policies.
- B.** The result of HLCS's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant by HLCS in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

VI. REPRISAL

HLCS will discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged unlawful sex discrimination toward a student or any person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such unlawful sex discrimination. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

VII. 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, or contacting the Office of Civil Rights for the United States Department of Education.

VIII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND EVALUATION

- A.** This policy shall be made available to all students, parents/guardians of students, parents/guardians of students, employees and organizations.
- B.** The school board shall review this policy and HLCS's operation for compliance with state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination on a continuous basis.

Note: The applicability and enforceability of this policy 522 is limited to, and qualified by, Minnesota or Federal law that, at the time any such circumstance within the scope of the policy arise, may be contrary to some aspect or all of the policy.