



## **Policy Against Harassment in Conjunction With MSNA Activities**

The Minnesota School Nutrition Association (MSNA) is committed to creating and maintaining a harassment-free environment for all participants in the Association's activities. The open exchange of ideas is central to MSNA's mission. This requires an environment that embraces diversity and provides a safe, welcoming environment for all. All participants, including members, employees, contractors, vendors, and guests, are expected to engage in mutually respectful behavior and to preserve MSNA's standard of professionalism at all times.

This policy **applies to all MSNA activities**, including:

- conferences, symposia, workshops, and events sponsored, co-sponsored, or in cooperation with MSNA;
- MSNA member meetings;
- exchanges among committees or other bodies associated with MSNA through its publications and other communication including but not limited to social media, conference calls, webinars, email discussions, messaging services and the like.

### **Expected Behavior**

We expect all participants in MSNA activities to abide by this policy in all venues, including ancillary events and unofficial social gatherings:

- Exercise consideration and respect in speech and actions;
- Refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior and speech;
- Be mindful of your surroundings and remember you're in the presence of fellow participants;
- Alert community leaders upon observation of a dangerous situation, someone in distress, or violations of this policy, even if they seem inconsequential.

### **Unacceptable Behavior**

MSNA will not tolerate any forms of the following:

**Abuse:** Any action directed at an individual that (a) interferes substantially with that person's participation; or (b) causes that person to fear for his/her personal safety. Types of abuse include threats, intimidation, bullying and stalking.

**Discriminatory Harassment:** Any conduct that discriminates or denigrates an individual on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship, nationality, age, sexual or

gender identity, disability, and any other characteristic protected by law in the location where the MSNA activity takes place.

**Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal/physical conduct of a sexual nature.

## **Specific Examples of Unacceptable Behaviors**

The following are specific examples of abuse, discriminatory harassment and sexual harassment:

- intimidating, harassing, abusive, discriminatory, derogatory or demeaning speech or actions by any participant in MSNA activities, at all related events and in one-on-one communications carried out in the context of SNA activities;
- offensive, degrading, humiliating, harmful, or prejudicial verbal or written comments or visual images related to gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability, age, appearance, or other personal characteristics;
- unwelcome advances or propositions, particularly when one individual has authority over the other;
- requests for sexual favors or other verbal/physical conduct of a sexual nature
- inappropriate touching of an individual's body;
- degrading or humiliating comments about an individual's appearance;
- inappropriate or gratuitous use of nudity, sexual images, or stereotyped images including using an activity-related communication channel to display or distribute sexually explicit or otherwise offensive or discriminatory images or messages;
- deliberate intimidation, stalking or following;
- harassing photography or recording;
- sustained disruption of talks or other events;
- unwelcome and uninvited attention or contact;
- physical assault (including unwelcome touch or groping);
- real or implied threat of physical harm;
- real or implied threat of professional or financial damage or harm.

**Harassment can occur when there is no deliberate intention to offend.** Harassment committed in a joking manner or disguised as a compliment still constitutes unacceptable behavior. Remember that sexist, racist, and other exclusionary jokes can be offensive to those around you. Always be mindful of your language and physical actions.

## **Consequences of Unacceptable Behavior**

If a participant in an MSNA activity engages in prohibited behavior, the Association reserves the right to take any action it deems appropriate. MSNA reserves the right to:

- remove an individual from any MSNA activity without warning or refund;

- prohibit an individual from participating in future MSNA activities, including serving as a presenter and contributing to MSNA publications and other content sources;
- exclude an individual from future MSNA leadership positions;
- remove an individual from current MSNA leadership positions
- exclude any individual from deriving other benefits from MSNA activities;
- suspend or terminate permanently membership in SNA/MSNA.

Such sanctions are examples and additional actions may be applied regardless of whether or not the offender is a former, current or prospective member of MSNA.

Appropriate sanctions also will be taken toward any individual who knowingly makes a false allegation of harassment.

### **How to Report Unacceptable Behavior**

Any individual who experiences harassment (as described above) at any MSNA activity should follow the **Procedures of Reporting Unacceptable Behavior**. Note: There may be situations (such as those involving Title IX issues in the United States and venue-or employer-specific policies) where an on-site person who is informed of harassment will be under an obligation to file a report with an individual or organization outside of MSNA.

This policy applies only to unacceptable behavior at MSNA activities. Complaints regarding other issues should be addressed as described under the applicable MSNA policy.

### **Addressing Grievances**

If you feel you have been falsely or unfairly accused of violating this Policy Against Harassment at MSNA Activities, you should notify [MSNA Executive Director](#) with a concise description of your grievance. Your grievance will be thoroughly investigated. Your grievance will be handled in accordance with our existing procedures.

### **Warnings and Disclaimers**

This Policy Against Harassment at MSNA Activities is not intended to limit open discussion of the merits of particular work or issues presented at MSNA events. It applies only to ***behavior*** at MSNA events and activities.

MSNA assumes no liability or responsibility for the actions of any member or other activity participant. Any individual who feels his/her safety is at risk due to harassment or for any other reason is encouraged to take appropriate steps to ensure personal safety.

This Policy supersedes any policy or guidelines concerning harassment issued by MSNA.

## **Procedure for Reporting Unacceptable Behavior at MSNA Activities**

**The first priority should always be personal safety. An individual who experiences harassment should take immediate action if needed to remain safe.**

The procedures here describe how to report unacceptable behavior at MSNA activities. The **Policy Against Harassment at MSNA Activities** describes actions that constitute harassment.

### **What Should I Do If I Experience or Witness Unacceptable Behavior?**

In the event of unacceptable behavior, you may wish to inform a person in authority. Those in authority to act in these cases include the event organizers (e.g., event chair, a MSNA Board of Director member, or an onsite MSNA staff member), or volunteers who have been designated to handle such complaints at this activity. These individuals can provide information about the process for handling complaints or handling immediate onsite needs.

*Note that there may be cases (such as those involving Title IX issues in the United States and venue- or employer-specific policies) where an on-site person who is informed of harassment will be required to file a complaint.*

**Any investigation or further action requires that a written communication be made to MSNA.** Report the incident using the **form for Reporting Violations of the MSNA Policy Against Harassment** (*coming soon!*). Prompt reporting is critical so that MSNA can take action to stop the conduct before it is repeated. All reports will be followed up promptly, with further investigation conducted where needed to confirm facts or resolve disputed facts. In conducting its investigations, MSNA will strive to keep the identity of the individual making the report as confidential as possible beyond the investigation.

**MSNA prohibits any threats or acts of retaliation against individuals who report unacceptable behavior or provide information in connection with a report by another individual.** MSNA considers a threat or act of retaliation to be as serious an offense as harassment itself and will handle reports of retaliation accordingly.

### **What Should I Do as a Person in Authority?**

As a person in authority at an MSNA event, you need to understand how to handle possible incidents. Those in authority include the event chair, a MSNA leader, an onsite SNA staff member, and other event organizers who have been designated to handle such complaints at this activity.

Your primary role as a person in authority is to (a) lend a sympathetic ear and (b) explain procedures for reporting unacceptable behavior if a person wishes to pursue

further action. In general, you should not attempt to mediate or resolve complaints informally.

If the situation appears to be an emergency (e.g., requiring medical assistance or if there has been an overt threat of violence), you should use judgment and common sense. Never presume, however, that an individual would welcome your involvement. Instead, tell the person to take any step he/she feels is needed to ensure personal safety.

If the immediate emergency extends to more than one individual, event organizers may need to take stronger actions, such as addressing the event attendees as a whole, barring further event attendance and participation by specific attendees, or imposing requirements on an attendee's further participation. Such decisions should be kept as minimally intrusive as possible, and must be made with the awareness that an allegation is not the same as a determination of guilt. Any post-event investigations, sanctions, or other actions should be handled by using the **form for Reporting Violations of the SNA Policy Against Harassment** (*coming soon!*).

If an event uses contractors, the event organizers should make sure the contractors are told to report any incident to a person in authority rather than dealing with it themselves.

### **What Enforcement Procedures Will be Followed?**

When receiving a report of unacceptable behavior, MSNA President will review and direct appropriate follow up. In consultation with the MSNA Board of Directors Ethics Committee. The MSNA Officer will also make a recommendation to SNA Board of Directors Ethics Committee regarding resolution. The Ethics will make a final, binding decision regarding whether MSNA's policy has been violated and the consequences of any such violation.

The Committee may take actions including, but not limited to, suspension or termination of membership in SNA/MSNA, exclusion from MSNA leadership positions, exclusion from participating in future MSNA events, and/or exclusion from deriving other benefits from MSNA activities. Such actions may be applied regardless of whether or not the offender is a member of MSNA.

The same actions may be taken toward any individual who engages in retaliation or who knowingly makes a false allegation of harassment.

***Adopted by MSNA Board of Directors, October 23, 2019***