

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SECTION: 200 Pupils

TITLE: Hazing

ADOPTED: February 15,
2018

REVISED:

247 HAZING

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the district and are prohibited at all times.

Definitions

Hazing - any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or which willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition of continued membership in, any organization. The term shall include, but not be limited to:[1]

1. Any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding;
2. Forced calisthenics;
3. Exposure to the elements;
4. Forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance;
5. Any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which is intended to or could result in humiliation, extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual;
6. Any willful destruction or removal of public or private property; or
7. Sexual Harassment/Assault.

Any activity, as described above, upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned

shall be presumed to be “forced” activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding.[1]

Student activity or organization - any organization, team, club, society, or group operating under the sanction of or recognized as an organization by the district.

Authority

The School Reform Commission prohibits hazing in connection with any student activity or organization regardless of whether the conduct occurs on or off school property or outside of school hours.[2][3][4]

In addition to posting this policy on the District’s website, the District shall annually inform students, parents/guardians, sponsors, volunteers and District employees that hazing is prohibited, by means of distribution of written policy, publication in handbooks, verbal instructions by the coach or sponsor at the start of the season or program and/or posting of notice/signs.[2]

This policy, along with other applicable district policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct, shall be provided to all school athletic coaches and all sponsors and volunteers affiliated with a student activity or organization annually, prior to coaching an athletic activity or serving as a responsible adult supervising, advising, assisting or otherwise participating in a student activity or organization.[2]

Delegation of Responsibility

Students, parents/guardians, coaches, sponsors, volunteers, and District employees shall be alert to incidents of hazing and shall report such conduct to the building principal.

District administrators shall investigate promptly all complaints of hazing and administer appropriate discipline to any individual or student activity or organization found to be in violation of this policy.

Mandatory Regulatory Guidelines

Complaint Procedure

When a student believes that s/he has been subject to hazing, the student shall promptly report the incident, orally or in writing, to the building principal.

The principal shall conduct a timely, impartial, thorough, and comprehensive investigation of the alleged hazing.

The principal shall prepare a written report summarizing the investigation and recommending disposition of the complaint.

The District shall document the corrective action taken.

Consequences for Violations

If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of hazing, the principal shall recommend appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as circumstances warrant, in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. Additionally, the student may be subject to disciplinary action by the coach or sponsor, up to and including removal from the activity.[2][5][6]

If the investigation results in a substantiated finding that a coach, sponsor, or volunteer affiliated with the student activity or organization engaged in, condoned or ignored any violation of this policy, s/he shall be disciplined in accordance with SRC policy and applicable laws and regulations. Discipline could include, but is not limited to, dismissal from the position as coach, sponsor, or volunteer, and/or dismissal from district employment.[7]

If a student activity or organization authorizes hazing in blatant disregard of this policy or other applicable district rules, penalties may also include rescission of permission for that organization to operate on school property or to otherwise operate under the sanction or recognition of the district.[2]

Any person who causes or participates in hazing may also be subject to criminal prosecution.[8]

Legal References:

1. 24 P.S. 5352
2. 24 P.S. 5354
3. Pol. 122 - Extracurricular Activities
4. Pol. 123 - Interscholastic Athletics
5. Pol. 218 - Student Conduct and Discipline
6. Pol. 233 - Suspension and Expulsion
7. Pol. 317 - Conduct/Disciplinary Procedures
8. 24 P.S. 5353

Related Information:

- 24 P.S. 511
- 24 P.S. 696
- 24 P.S. 5351 et seq
- Philadelphia Home Rule Charter - 12-300
- Pol. 916 - Volunteers