

HAZING

Background

The Mt. Lebanon School District's goal is to establish a secure climate conducive to teaching and student learning. The District expects all students and adults to act respectfully toward one another at all times.

Objective

The objective of this policy is to:

1. Provide a safe positive environment for learning for students and staff that is free from hazing;
2. Inform students, employees and parents about hazing, its adverse impact on students and the District generally, and how to prevent and resolve hazing incidents, so as to minimize the potential for hazing in District-recognized activities; and
3. Communicate to District students, employees and parents that the District does not condone hazing.

Definitions

“Hazing,” for purposes of this policy, is defined as any activity or conduct, whether physical, verbal or electronically communicated, that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, any District organization.

“Endanger the physical health” shall include but not be limited to any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping; beating; branding; forced calisthenics; exposure to the elements; forced consumption of any food, alcoholic or other beverage, drug, or controlled substance; or other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the individual.

“Endanger the mental health” shall include any activity that would subject an individual to extreme mental stress, such as prolonged sleep deprivation, forced prolonged exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual.

Any hazing activity, whether by an individual or a group, shall be presumed to be a forced activity, even if a student willingly participates.

Policy

The Board prohibits any form of hazing in connection with any District organization, on any school premises, any school vehicles or at any school related event.

No student, coach, sponsor, volunteer or other District employee shall plan, direct, encourage, assist or engage in any hazing activity.

No administrator, coach, sponsor, volunteer or other District employee shall permit, condone or tolerate any form of hazing.

The District will investigate all complaints of hazing and will administer appropriate discipline to any individual who violates this policy.

The District encourages students who have been subjected to hazing and their parents to promptly report such incidents to the building principal. Administrators, coaches, sponsors, volunteers, students and District employees shall be alert to incidents of hazing and shall report such conduct to the building principal.

Investigation Procedures/Discipline

Upon learning about a hazing incident, if deemed necessary, the building principal or his/her designee shall interview the students and others involved in the matter, contact the parents of the students, and undertake a thorough investigation. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents and school employees, and a review of school records. Hazing is also a violation of the District policy on Student Conduct (Policy JIC); as a result, consequences for students involved in hazing may include not only counseling or a parent conference but also discipline such as detention, suspension and/or expulsion.

When District employees are involved, any investigation and discipline will be consistent with federal and state law, including the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, as amended, and with any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Violations may result in discipline, such as removal or termination.

Where deemed appropriate, hazing incidents may be referred to law enforcement officials.

Discrimination/Unlawful Harassment/Title IX Sexual Harassment

Every report of alleged hazing that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws and policies against discrimination, including harassment and Title IX sexual harassment shall be handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the full participation of the Title IX Coordinator/Compliance Officer. If, in the course of a hazing investigation, potential issues of discrimination are identified, the Title IX Coordinator/Compliance Officer shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of

alleged discrimination, including harassment and Title IX sexual harassment, as well as the incidents of alleged hazing.

Administrative Responsibility

1. Students, staff and volunteers shall be informed of this policy and shall be expected to report any and all suspected incidents of hazing to their building principal.
2. Coaches and Sponsors shall inform students of the District's prohibition of hazing, and shall discourage students from engaging in any form of hazing.
3. Parents shall be informed of this policy and shall be expected to report to their building principal any suspected incidents of hazing involving their own children or other District students.
4. It is the responsibility of the Administration to implement and enforce this policy, and to develop Administrative Procedures for implementation or enforcement where necessary.

Communication

This policy shall be communicated to the public and all school district personnel, students and parents.

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