

# WILLIAM PENN SCHOOL DISTRICT

SIX BOROUGHES - TEN SCHOOLS - ONE DISTRICT WORKING TOGETHER

*Innovation. Opportunity. Success.*

Section	200 Pupils
Title	<b>Student Hazing</b>
Code	247 Vol III 2021
Status	Under Review- September 2021

## 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

~~For purposes of this policy **hazing** is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or membership or affiliation with any organization recognized by the Board.~~

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~~**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 beverage, drug, or controlled substance; or other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the individual.~~

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~~**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, 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.~~

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

## **Definitions**

**Hazing occurs when a person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting or affiliating a student with an organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing membership or status in an organization, causes, coerces or forces a student to do any of the following:**<sup>[1]</sup>

- 1. Violate federal or state criminal law.**

- 2. Consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug or other substance which subjects the student to a risk of emotional or physical harm.**
- 3. Endure brutality of a physical nature, including whipping, beating, branding, calisthenics or exposure to the elements.**
- 4. Endure brutality of a mental nature, including activity adversely affecting the mental health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment.**
- 5. Endure brutality of a sexual nature.**
- 6. Endure any other activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to the student.**

**Aggravated hazing occurs when a person commits an act of hazing that results in serious bodily injury or death to the student and:**[\[2\]](#)

- 1. The person acts with reckless indifference to the health and safety of the student; or**
- 2. The person causes, coerces or forces the consumption of an alcoholic liquid or drug by the student.**

**Organizational hazing occurs when an organization intentionally, knowingly or recklessly promotes or facilitates hazing.**[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)

**Any activity, as described above, shall be deemed a violation of this policy regardless of whether:**[\[5\]](#)

- 1. The consent of the student was sought or obtained, or**
- 2. The conduct was sanctioned or approved by the school or organization.**

**Student activity or organization means any activity, society, corps, team, club or service, social or similar group, operating under the sanction of or recognized as an organization by the district, whose members are primarily students or alumni of the organization.**[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)

**For purposes of this policy, bodily injury shall mean impairment of physical condition or substantial pain.**[\[8\]](#)

**For purposes of this policy, serious bodily injury shall mean bodily injury which creates a substantial risk of death or which causes serious, permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ.**[\[8\]](#)

### Authority

~~The Board does not condone any form of initiation or harassment, known as hazing, as part of any school sponsored student activity. No student, coach, sponsor, volunteer or district employee shall plan, direct, encourage, assist or engage in any hazing activity.~~[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

~~The Board directs that no administrator, coach, sponsor, volunteer or district employee shall 231 E Fariston Dr, Philadelphia, PA 19120~~

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

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~~The Board encourages students who have been subjected to hazing to promptly report such incidents to the building principal.~~

### **Authority**

**The Board 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.**[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[9\]](#)[\[10\]](#)

**No student, parent/guardian, coach, sponsor, volunteer or district employee shall engage in, condone or ignore any form of hazing.**

**The Board encourages students who believe they, or others, have been subjected to hazing to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.**

### **Title IX Sexual Harassment and Other Discrimination**

**Every report of alleged hazing that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws against discrimination shall be handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the full participation of the Superintendent and Title IX Coordinator. If, in the course of a hazing investigation, potential issues of discrimination are identified, the Title IX Coordinator shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination as well as the incidents of alleged hazing.**[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

~~District administrators shall investigate promptly all complaints of hazing and administer appropriate discipline to any individual who violates this policy.~~

~~Students, administrators, coaches, sponsors, volunteers, and district employees shall be alert to incidents of hazing and shall report such conduct to the building principal.~~

~~The district shall annually inform students, parents, coaches, sponsors, volunteers, and district staff that hazing of district students is prohibited, by means of:~~

- ~~1. Publication in handbooks.~~

~~2.—Presentation at an assembly~~

~~3.—Verbal instructions by the coach or sponsor at the start of the season or program.~~

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 or designee.

When a student's behavior indicates a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community, or others, district staff shall report the student to the building leader or direct supervisor, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)

### Guidelines

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#### Complaint Procedure

~~1.—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.~~

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~~2.—The principal shall conduct a timely, impartial, thorough, and comprehensive investigation of the alleged hazing.~~

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~~3.—The principal shall prepare a written report summarizing the investigation and recommending disposition of the complaint. Copies of the report shall be provided to the complainant, the accused, and others directly involved, as appropriate.~~

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~~4.—If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of hazing, the principal shall recommend appropriate disciplinary action, as circumstances warrant, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Additionally, the student may be subject to disciplinary action by the coach or sponsor, up to and including removal from the activity.~~

### Guidelines

In addition to posting this policy on the district's publicly accessible website, the district shall inform students, parents/guardians, sponsors, volunteers, and district employees of the district's policy prohibiting hazing, including district rules, penalties for violations of the policy, and the program established by the district for enforcement of the policy by means of: [\[4\]](#)

1. distribution of written policy
2. publication in handbooks
3. presentation at an assembly
4. verbal instructions by the coach or sponsor at the start of the season or program
5. posting of notice/signs.

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, prior to coaching an athletic activity or serving as a responsible adult supervising, advising, assisting or otherwise participating in a student activity or organization together with a notice that they are expected to read and abide by the policies, procedures, and Codes of Conduct.[\[7\]](#)

### **Complaint Procedure**

A student who believes that they have been subject to hazing is encouraged to promptly report the incident to the building principal or designee. The district shall utilize the Complaint Procedures in Policy 103- Nondiscrimination in School and Classroom Practices and Policy 104 Nondiscrimination in Employment Practices.

Students are encouraged to use the district's report form (AR103.1-REPORT FORM FOR COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION/DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT, available from the building principal, or to put the complaint in writing; however, oral complaints shall be accepted and documented. The person accepting the complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutrally, and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the student filing the complaint or those accused of a violation of this policy.

The Board directs that verbal and written complaints of hazing shall be provided to the building principal or designee, who shall promptly notify the Superintendent or designee of the allegations and determine who shall conduct the investigation. Allegations of hazing shall be investigated promptly, and appropriate corrective or preventative action be taken when allegations are substantiated. The Board directs that any complaint of hazing brought pursuant to this policy shall also be reviewed for conduct which may not be proven to be hazing under this policy but merits review and possible action under other Board policies.

### **Interim Measures/Police**

Upon receipt of a complaint of hazing, the building principal or designee, in consultation with the Superintendent or designee, shall determine what, if any interim measures should be put in place to protect students from further hazing, bullying, discrimination, or retaliatory conduct related to the alleged incident and report. Such interim measures may include, but not be limited to, the suspension of an adult who is involved, the separation of alleged victims and perpetrators, and the determination of what the complaining student needs or wants through questioning.

Those receiving the initial report and conducting or overseeing the investigation will assess whether the complaint, if proven, would constitute hazing, aggravated hazing, or organizational hazing and shall report it to the police consistent with district practice and, as appropriate, consult with legal counsel about whether to report the matter to the police at every stage of the proceeding. The decision to report a matter to the police should not involve analysis by district personnel of whether safe harbor provisions might apply to the

person being reported, but information on the facts can be shared with the police in this regard.[\[15\]](#)

*Referral to Law Enforcement and Safe Schools Reporting Requirements –*

For purposes of reporting hazing incidents to law enforcement in accordance with Safe Schools Act reporting, the term incident shall mean an instance involving an act of violence; the possession of a weapon; the possession, use, or sale of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia as defined in the Pennsylvania Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act; the possession, use, or sale of alcohol or tobacco; or conduct that constitutes an offense listed under the Safe Schools Act.[\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)[\[18\]](#)

The Superintendent or designee shall immediately report required incidents and may report discretionary incidents, as defined in the Safe Schools Act, committed by students on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.[\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)[\[19\]](#)[\[20\]](#)[\[21\]](#)[\[22\]](#)

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in a defined incident as a victim or suspect immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.[\[17\]](#)[\[22\]](#)[\[23\]](#)

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all new incidents to the Office for Safe Schools on the required form.[\[16\]](#)[\[22\]](#)

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality of all parties, witnesses, the allegations, the filing of a complaint, and the investigation shall be handled in accordance with applicable law, regulations, this policy, and the district's legal and investigative obligations.

**Retaliation**

Reprisal or retaliation relating to reports of hazing or participation in an investigation of allegations of hazing is prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary action.

**Consequences for Violations**

*Safe Harbor –*

**An individual needing medical attention or seeking medical attention for another shall not be subject to criminal prosecution if the individual complies with the requirements under law, subject to the limitations set forth in law.[\[15\]](#)**

*Students –*

**If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of hazing, the investigator shall recommend appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as circumstances warrant, in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. The student may also be subject to disciplinary action by the coach or sponsor, up to and including removal from the activity or organization. The fact of whether a student qualified for and received safe harbor under a criminal investigation shall be considered in assigning discipline.[\[4\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[15\]](#)[\[24\]](#)[\[25\]](#)**

*Nonstudent Violators/Organizational Hazing -*

**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, the coach, sponsor, or volunteer shall be disciplined in accordance with Board 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.[\[26\]](#)**

**If an organization is found to have engaged in organizational hazing, it shall be subject to the imposition of fines and other appropriate penalties. Penalties may include rescission of permission for that organization to operate on school property or to otherwise operate under the sanction or recognition of the district.**

*Criminal Prosecution –*

**Any person or organization that causes or participates in hazing may also be subject to criminal prosecution.[\[4\]](#)**

**PSBA Revision 6/21 © 2021 PSBA**

1. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 2802

2. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 2803

3. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 2804

4. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 2808

5. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 2806

6. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 2801

7. 24 P.S. 511

8. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 2301

9. Pol. 122

10. Pol. 123

11. Pol. 103

**Policy 247- Hazing**  
**September 2021 Review**

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12. Pol. 103.1

13. 24 P.S. 1302-E

14. Pol. 236.1

15. 18 Pa. C.S.A. 2810

16. 24 P.S. 1303-A

17. 22 PA Code 10.2

18. 35 P.S. 780-102

19. 24 P.S. 1302.1-A

20. 22 PA Code 10.21

21. 22 PA Code 10.22

22. Pol. 805.1

23. 22 PA Code 10.25

24. Pol. 218

25. Pol. 233

26. Pol. 317

18 Pa. C.S.A. 2801 et seq

22 PA Code 10.23

Pol. 113.1

Pol. 916