No. 5505
SECTION: STUDENTS
TITLE: HAZING

ADOPTED: 11/15/16
READOPTED: 9/17/19;6/21/22;4/21/26
REVISED:

OXFORD AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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.

For purposes of this policy:

Hazing is defined as 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. 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; or
6. Any willful destruction or removal of public or private property.

For purposes of this policy, 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.

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

The Board of School Directors 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. Conduct that constitutes sexual and/or gender-based harassment and/or bullying is also prohibited.

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 have been subjected to hazing or who observe incidents of hazing to promptly report such incidents to the building principal.

Students, parent/guardians, coaches, sponsors, volunteers and district employees must be alert to incidents of hazing and shall report conduct to the building principal.

District administrators shall investigate promptly all complaints of hazing and administer appropriate discipline to any individual, student activity or organization found to be in violation of this policy. Complaint forms and a copy of this policy shall be available in the main office of each school and shall be provided to individuals making a complaint under this policy.

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:

1. Distribution of written policy by posting of the policy on the district's website and publication in student and/or parent handbooks or agenda books.
2. Verbal instructions by the coach or sponsor at the start of the season or program.

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 organizations 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.

Complaint Procedure

The complaint process shall follow the procedure set forth.

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

When a staff member, coach, activity sponsor, parent, volunteer or other district employee has observed an incident that may constitute hazing or been advised by a student, parent/guardian, volunteer or other person of a possible incident of hazing, s/he shall promptly report the incident to the building principal.

The principal shall document receipt of an oral and/or written complaint, and make an initial determination whether the conduct complained of may be in violation of other district policies such as the policy prohibiting harassment, discrimination and/or bullying. The principal will conduct a timely, impartial, thorough and comprehensive investigation of the alleged hazing. The principal may delegate his/her investigative responsibility to another district administrator. In addition, the principal or his/her designee may report a complaint of hazing to the district's Compliance Officer and/or law enforcement officials.

The principal or his/her designee shall prepare a written report summarizing the investigation and recommending disposition of the complaint. When there has been a finding that hazing has occurred, appropriate discipline and/or corrective action shall be assigned.

The district shall document the discipline/corrective action assigned and shall advise the complainant and accused of the outcome of the investigation.

Consequences for Violations

If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of hazing, the principal or his/her designee shall recommend appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, 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.

Building principals shall take such disciplinary action for violations of this policy as is appropriate and within their authority as set forth in policy and the Code of Conduct.

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 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.

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.

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