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5541 ANTI-HAZING

A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Hazing is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and disciplined environment. The Board of Education prohibits acts of hazing and adopts this Policy against hazing in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-32.2. The provisions of this Policy apply to high school(s); middle school(s); and/or elementary school(s) in the school district.

"Hazing" in a school setting includes, but is not limited to, conduct by an individual(s) who is a member and/or representative of a school-sponsored student organization, club, or athletic team where such individual(s) conditions a student's acceptance as a member into such group on whether the student engages in activities that are humiliating, demeaning, intimidating, and exhausting to the student.

N.J.S.A. 2C:40-3.a. indicates hazing may also include, but is not limited to, the conduct outlined below:

1. An individual(s) causes, coerces, or otherwise induces a student to commit an act that violates Federal or State criminal law;
2. An individual(s) causes, coerces, or otherwise induces a student to consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug or other substance which subjects the student to a risk of emotional or physical harm or is otherwise deleterious to the student's health;
3. An individual(s) subjects a student to abuse, mistreatment, harassment, or degradation of a physical nature, including, but not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, excessive calisthenics, or exposure to the elements;

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4. An individual(s) subjects a student to abuse, mistreatment, harassment, or degradation of a mental or emotional nature, including, but not limited to, activity adversely affecting the mental or emotional health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact, or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment;
5. An individual(s) subjects a student to abuse, mistreatment, harassment, or degradation of a sexual nature; or
6. An individual(s) subjects a student to any other activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to the student.

Board of Education members, school employees, and contracted service providers are required to report an alleged incident of hazing that may take place or has taken place on or off school grounds to the Principal or designee on the same day when the individual witnessed or received reliable information regarding such an incident. Students, parents, volunteers, or visitors are encouraged to report an alleged incident of hazing that may take place or has taken place on or off school grounds to the Principal or designee on the same day when the individual witnessed or received reliable information regarding any such incident.

Any report of an alleged incident of hazing shall be immediately investigated by the Principal or designee in accordance with procedures used to investigate alleged violations of the Student Discipline/Code of Conduct and Policy and Regulation 5600. A Principal or designee who receives a report of an alleged incident of hazing and fails to initiate or conduct an investigation and fails to minimize or eliminate the hazing may be subject to disciplinary action.

The Principal or designee may identify behavior when investigating an alleged incident of hazing indicating harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14 et seq. – New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR). If the Principal or designee identifies behavior indicating HIB, the Principal or designee shall ensure a separate investigation is conducted in accordance with the ABR and Policy 5512.

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The Superintendent or designee shall report to local law enforcement any hazing incident that rises to the level of mandatory reporting under the “Uniform Memorandum of Agreement Between Education Officials and Law Enforcement Officials” or any other agreement between local law enforcement and the school district pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1(b).

Hazing that involves the participation of a coach, teacher, or other adult may constitute child abuse and shall be addressed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36-25 and Policy and Regulation 8462.

The Board shall enforce any penalty for violation of this Policy in accordance with the student code of conduct and Policy and Regulation 5600, or any other applicable Board Policy or Regulation. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-32.3 appropriate penalties for a violation of this Policy may include, but are not limited to:

1. Withholding of diplomas or transcripts pending compliance with the rules;
2. Rescission of permission for the organization or group whose student member(s) are being penalized under this Policy, to operate on school property or to otherwise operate under the sanction or recognition of the school district; and
3. The imposition of probation, suspension, dismissal, or expulsion of a student member(s).

Any discipline instituted in response to a violation of this Policy may be in addition to discipline for a violation of Policy 5512, Policy and Regulation 5600, and any other applicable Board Policy and Regulation.

The school district shall ensure that students are informed of this Policy, including the rules, penalties, and program of enforcement under this Policy. This Policy shall be posted on the school district’s publicly accessible Internet website.

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-25; 18A:37-13.2; 18A:37-14 et seq.; 18A:37-32.2;
18A:37-32.3

Adopted: 25 July 2022