

DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: HAZING

ADOPTED: November 9, 2011

REVISED:

	247. HAZING
1. Purpose	The Board strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students in the schools. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the district to maintain an educational and extracurricular environment in which hazing in any form is not tolerated.
2. Definitions	The term hazing includes but is not limited to any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student 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 for continued membership in, any organization operating under the sanction of or recognized as an organization by the district. 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. 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.
3. Authority SC 510, 511 Pol. 122, 123	The Board prohibits all forms of initiation or harassment of students, known as hazing, by all district students, staff members, contracted individuals, guests, and volunteers in the schools. No student, coach, sponsor, contracted individual, guest, volunteer or district employee shall plan, direct, encourage, assist or engage in any hazing activity.

4. Delegation of Responsibility	The Board directs that complaints of hazing shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith charges of hazing. The Board encourages students who have been subjected to hazing to promptly report such incidents to the building principal. Each staff member shall be responsible to establish and maintain an educational and extracurricular environment free from all forms of hazing. Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of their fellow students and to ensure an atmosphere free from all forms of hazing. 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/guardians, coaches, sponsors, independent contractors, volunteers and district staff that hazing of district students is prohibited, by means of distribution of written policy, publication in handbooks, presentation at an assembly, and/or verbal instructions by the coach or sponsor at the start of the season or program. Students shall be informed that they may choose to report hazing complaints to counselors or administrators. All employees who receive hazing complaints from a student shall report such to the building principal. If the building principal is the subject of a complaint, the student shall report the complaint directly to the Superintendent or a designated administrator.
5. Guidelines	<u>Complaint Procedure</u> 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 or a designated employee, who shall inform the student of his/her rights and of the complaint process. The building principal immediately shall notify the Superintendent or other designated administrator and shall conduct an impartial, thorough and confidential investigation of the alleged hazing.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes hazing, the totality of the circumstances, nature of the conduct, and context in which the alleged conduct occurred shall be investigated.

The principal shall prepare a written report summarizing the investigation and recommending disposition of the complaint. The complainant and the accused shall be informed of the outcome of the investigation, including the recommended disposition of the complaint.

If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of hazing, the district shall take prompt, corrective action to ensure the conduct ceases and will not recur.

A substantiated charge against a district student shall subject such student to disciplinary action, consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, and may include educational activities and/or counseling services related to hazing. Additionally, the student may be subject to disciplinary action by the coach or sponsor, up to and including removal from the activity.

If it is concluded that a student has made false accusations, such student shall be subject to disciplinary action, consistent with the Code of Student Conduct.

A substantiated charge against a district staff member shall subject such staff member to disciplinary action, including discharge.

The district shall document the corrective action taken and, where not prohibited by law, inform the complainant.

Appeal Procedure

If the complainant or accused is not satisfied with the principal's decision, s/he may file a written appeal to the Assistant Superintendent or designee.

The Assistant Superintendent or designee shall review the initial investigation and report and may also conduct a reasonable investigation. S/He shall prepare a written response to the appeal. Copies of the response shall be provided to the complainant, the accused, building principal and others directly involved, as appropriate.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 510, 511

Board Policy – 122, 123