

HAZING

Hazing Defined

Maine statute defines injurious hazing as “any action or situation, including harassing behavior, that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of any school personnel or a student enrolled in school or any activity expected of a student as a condition of joining or maintaining membership in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses or endangers the student, regardless of the student's willingness to participate in the activity.”

In addition, the Regional School Unit # 26 Board of Directors considers hazing as any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that has the potential to humiliate, degrade, abuse, or endanger the mental or physical health of that person regardless of the person’s willingness to participate in the activity.

“Harassing behavior” includes acts of intimidation and any other conduct that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of a student or staff member.

“Acts of intimidation” include extortion, menacing, direct or indirect threats of violence, incidents of violence, bullying, statements or taunting of a malicious and/or derogatory nature that recklessly or intentionally endanger the mental or physical health of another person, and property damage or theft.

Hazing Prohibited

Regardless of the person’s willingness to participate, hazing activities of any type, either on or off school property, by any student, staff member, group or organization affiliated with this school unit are inconsistent with the educational process and shall be prohibited at all times.

No administrator, faculty member, or other employee of the school unit shall encourage, permit, condone, or tolerate hazing activities. No student, including leaders of students’ organizations, shall plan, encourage, or engage in hazing activities.

Students who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action which may include suspension, expulsion, or other appropriate measures. Administrators, professional staff, and all other employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

In the case of an organization affiliated with RSU #26 that engages in hazing, penalties may include rescission of permission for that organization to operate on school property or to receive any other benefit of affiliation with the school unit.

Persons not associated with this school unit who fail to abide by this policy may be subject to ejection from school property and/or other measures as may be available under the law.

These penalties shall be in addition to any civil or criminal penalties to which the violator or organization may be subject.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent will be responsible for working with school administrators and guidance staff to develop, implement and oversee procedures for:

- A. Student and parent reporting of hazing to staff and school administrators;
- B. Staff reporting of hazing to school administrators;
- C. Review of reports and investigation of hazing incidents;
- D. Intervention with and/or discipline of students who engage in hazing;
- E. Support for students who are victims of hazing;
- F. Regular, on-going training programs in hazing prevention for staff and students; and
- G. Periodic evaluation of hazing prevention, intervention, and training efforts in RSU # 26 schools and reporting on such efforts to the Board annually in June and/or upon request of the Board at any other time.

Reporting

Students who have been hazed or who observe incidents of hazing are **strongly** encouraged to report this behavior to a staff member or school administrator. Staff should report hazing to the building principal.

Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of hazing are prohibited. Any student who is determined to have falsely accused another of hazing shall be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Responding to Hazing

In determining the appropriate response to students who engage in hazing behavior, school administrators should consider the ages and maturity of the students involved, the type of behaviors, the frequency and/or pattern of behaviors, the context in which the incident occurred, and other relevant circumstances. Consequences may range from

positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension, expulsion, and/or reports to law enforcement officials.

Dissemination of Policy

School employees, students, and parents/guardians shall be informed of this policy/procedure through handbooks and/or other means selected by the school administration.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 6553

Cross Reference: ACAA: Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
ACAB: Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Employees
JICIA: Weapons, Violence and School Safety
JICK: Bullying

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