

POLICY: HAZING

Policy

It is the policy of the Leland and Gray Union School District that all its schools provide safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environments. Hazing in connection with any school sponsored activity or program is prohibited. The superintendent shall develop administrative rules and procedures as needed to enforce this policy and to comply with state law.

Definitions²

- A. Hazing** means any act committed on or off school grounds by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a student in connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with the district; and which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of the student. Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts. Hazing shall not include any activity or conduct that furthers the legitimate curricular, extracurricular, or military training program goals provided that the goals are approved by the principal and provided that the activity or conduct furthers those goals in a manner that is appropriate, contemplated by the school district, and normal and customary for similar public school programs.
- B. Organization** means a fraternity, sorority, athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or other similar group, whose members primarily are students of the District, and which is affiliated with the district.
- C. Pledging** means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.
- D. Principal** means the principal of a school or any person designated by the principal to carry out a particular function.
- E. Student** means any person who: (1) is enrolled in any school or program operated by the district, (2) has been accepted for admission into any school or program operated by the district, or (3) intends to enroll in any school or program operated by the district during any of its regular sessions after an official academic break.

Reporting of Hazing³

- A. Students who have reason to believe that an incident of hazing might or did occur** may report such belief to any coach of an extracurricular team, teacher, school nurse, guidance counselor, or school administrator. Staff members who have received such a report from a student, or who otherwise have reason to believe that an incident of hazing might or did occur, shall report the incident to the Principal of the school, or, in the event of the unavailability of the Principal, to another person designated by the Principal to receive reports of hazing. The report may be written or oral. If the report is made orally, the receiver shall make a written record of the report.

- B. It is possible that an incident of hazing might also fall within the definition of abuse, neglect, or exploitation as those terms are defined in 33 V.S.A. §4912(2) and 33 V.S.A. §§6902(1), (7) and (9). Reporting a suspected incident of hazing to the Principal does not relieve the reporter of any obligations additionally to report such suspicions to the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services as set forth in 33 V.S.A. §4914 or to the Commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disabilities as set forth in 33 V.S.A. §6904.
- C. Incidents of hazing that the principal determines may constitute violations of criminal laws shall be reported by the principal to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Date Adopted: 11-24-09

Date Reviewed: 6-9-15

Legal Reference(s): 16 V.S.A. §11(a)(30) (Definition of hazing)

16 V.S.A. §§140a-140d (Hazing)

16 V.S.A. §165(a)(1), (8) (School Quality Standards)

16 V.S.A. §565 (Powers of school boards)

20 U.S.C. §1232g (FERPA)

34 C.F.R. Part 99 (FERPA rules)

Cross Reference: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect (F8)

Harassment of Students (F20)

¹ 16 V.S.A. 565(b) requires school boards to adopt "...hazing policies which shall be at least as stringent as model policies developed by the Commissioner. Subsection (b)(2) of Section 565 lists six required components of the required hazing policy. Subsection (c) of Section 565 requires "school districts (to) establish rules setting forth procedures for dealing with ...hazing of students which include (three components)."

² See 16 V.S.A. §§11(a)(30); 140a.

³ 16 V.S.A. § 565((b)(2) requires that these provisions be in school board policy.