

School Board
Park Center High School
7300 Brooklyn Blvd
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

3/13/2016

Dear Board Members,

Over the past several months I have spent time educating myself in regards to hazing policies in today's educational environments. Based on my findings and the responsibility that we as educators have for the students at Park Center High School and more inclusively, the district, I would highly encourage the school and district to adopt a zero-tolerance anti-hazing policy that would positively impact *all* students, activities and athletics.

Hazing is an act against a student, or a coercing of a student that creates the risk of harm in order for the student to be initiated or affiliated with a team, organization, group or activity. Besides the risk of physical harm, hazing can also lead to great psychological trauma. Hazing can lead students to drop out of activities over fear of harm or embarrassment, which prevents them from exploring and experiencing all of the benefits extracurricular activities have to offer. With the baseball program at Park Center, I have implemented a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to hazing. Players who participate in hazing are suspended from the program for the remainder of the season and must attend leadership training before they can be tryout for the team the following year. A second violation of the team policy results in players being suspended from the program indefinitely. This policy is currently distributed at our mandatory pre-season player and parent meeting.

As a coach and advocator for student success and well-being, there should be no tolerance for hazing. With an adopted and published policy, students, parents, coaches and community members will be able to clearly see that Park Center High School and District 279 stands united against all forms of hazing. As a coach, I would encourage our educational community to take a proactive approach to hazing and implement a universal policy as soon as possible. Recently, I have drafted a hazing policy that I would like to submit to the Board for discussion. It would be a pleasure to have some genuine discussions over this document with hopes that we can provide our students with a better opportunity to learn and grow throughout their time at Park Center High School and School District 279.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kevin Manson
Park Center High School
Baseball Coach

Enclosed: Hazing Policy Draft

Park Center High School & District 279

Hazing Policy Draft

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to help maintain a safe learning environment for all students and staff within Park Center High School and the greater school district. Hazing behaviors do not align with the educational goals of the district and should be prohibited.

II. Hazing Defined

Hazing is defined as committing an intentional act or coercing a student into an act that has the potential to create or risk harm in an attempt to be affiliated or to obtain membership with a group, regardless of the student's willingness to participate.

Types of hazing may include:

- Physical harm (beating, branding, piercing, striking etc.)
- Verbal abuse
- Cyber bullying
- Deprivation of daily needs (food, water, sleep)
- Excessive exercise
- Harassment (physical, sexual, verbal)
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Any activity that requires the violation of law

Hazing is often falsely associated with creating stronger group morale and teambuilding. Acceptable and effective forms of teambuilding may include:

- Teambuilding activities
- Ropes Course participation
- Community Service projects
- Encourage open discussion and communication in meetings
- Share meals together

III. General Statement of Hazing Policy

- a. No student, teacher, coach, administrator or any other employee of the school district should promote, aid or engage in hazing.

- b. No student, teacher, coach, administrator or any other employee of the school district tolerate, allow or condone hazing.
- c. Student consent to hazing does not make it permissible.
- d. This policy applies to all school and district activities that happen on or off campus before, during or after school hours.
- e. Students who participate in hazing will be subject to discipline.
- f. The Superintendent will investigate all complaints of hazing against students and employees of the district.

IV. Reporting

- a. Any person who is the victim of hazing or has observed hazing should report the acts to an appropriate school official, faculty member or staff.
- b. The Principal at each campus will be the person responsible for receiving any hazing complaints or observations. Hazing may also be brought directly to the district Superintendent.
- c. Any staff, faculty or other employees of the district that observe, suspect or are informed of hazing should report the information immediately to their respective Principal.

V. School District Action

- a. Upon receipt of complaints, the Superintendent will launch an investigation by school district officials
- b. After the investigation is complete, the School District will take appropriate action.
- c. Hazing falls under a zero-tolerance policy. Discipline is severe in order to deter violations of the policy.
 - i. Students who are found to have committed an act of hazing shall serve a 10-day school suspension, a one-year suspension from all extracurricular activities and are required to participate in leadership training before resuming participation.
 - ii. A second violation of the hazing policy will result in the student being expelled from school.

VI. Dissemination of Policy

This policy will be printed in student planners and distributed during every meeting involving athletics, student clubs, band, orchestra, and other student extracurricular activities. The policy will also be available on the district and individual high school websites.