

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE POLICY MANUAL

SECTION J STUDENTS

7a. Prohibition of Hazing (Voted 12/1/16; #16-78)

The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB), in partnership with parents, guardians, and the community, believe that a positive, safe, and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve. By compromising a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment, hazing disrupts a student's ability to learn and limits their opportunity to participate fully in the school community. The Brookline School Committee, therefore, prohibits hazing throughout the Public Schools of Brookline. The purpose of this policy is to prevent hazing, to stop it if and where it occurs, and to provide guidance to the school community for a comprehensive response to all those affected by hazing.

Definitions

Per M.G.L. c. 269, S. 17, hazing means any conduct or method of initiation into any school or student organization or formal or informal peer group, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental status, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Incidents of hazing are not bullying. Bullying incidents should be addressed using the PSB Bullying Prevention Policy Section J7. Hazing incidents that may have targeted a person because of the person's protected class (*e.g.*, race, sex, etc.) and/or protected conduct (*e.g.*, complaining about discrimination, etc.) should also be evaluated as possible violations of the PSB's anti-discrimination, Sections G6 and J6 of Policy Manual) and addressed accordingly.

Prohibition

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 269, §§ 17-19, and this policy, no student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student or other person while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event, regardless of location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any student or person while on school property.

Reporting of Hazing

Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal including the time, date, locations, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the PSB are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE POLICY MANUAL

Any student who is present during a hazing incident has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days.

Participation in Hazing

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may be suspended from school for up to ten (10) school days. If the conduct is sufficiently severe, such student may be suspended from school for up to ninety (90) days.

Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of the hazing activity may be suspended from school for up to ninety (90) days, but in any event will not receive a lesser disciplinary action than that given to a participant.

The PSB's Conduct and Discipline Policy, Section J(8) of the PSB Policy Manual, shall govern disciplinary processes and measures imposed for hazing.

Student Handbook

As with other policies associated with student conduct, this policy shall be included in all PSB Student Handbooks.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 269:17, 18, 19
603 CMR 33