

LIONSGATE ACADEMY

910 HAZING

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I. PURPOSE

Hazing activities of any type, including initiation into extracurricular activities, are inconsistent with the educational goals of Lionsgate Academy and are prohibited at all times. Hazing is about abuse of power and violation of human dignity. Hazing is a form of abuse and victimization.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of Lionsgate Academy shall plan, direct, encourage, aid or engage in hazing, whether the student being hazed is a Lionsgate student or a student of another district.
- B. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of Lionsgate Academy shall permit, condone, or tolerate hazing. Hazing is not acceptable behavior and students involved in hazing may face disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from school.
- C. Students or school staff/volunteers/contractors involved in hazing will be disciplined even if the student being hazed appears to give permission or consent to be hazed.
- D. Students or school staff/volunteers/contractors involved in hazing will be disciplined for hazing that occurs on or off school property and during, before, or after the school day. This includes weekends and other non-school days.
- E. Students or staff involved in the hazing of students will be disciplined as described in this hazing policy. If a student being hazed violates a separate provision of Lionsgate Academy's discipline policy while being hazed, that student may be disciplined for violating that provision of the district's discipline policy.
- F. The executive director and the human resources director will investigate all complaints or reports of hazing by staff. The executive director and the director of student services will investigate all complaints or reports of hazing by students. The executive director will discipline any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of Lionsgate Academy who is found to have been involved in the hazing of one or more students.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Hazing" is defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.69, Subdivision 1(a) as "committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization."

- B. Hazing includes any activity that humiliates, degrades, or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. As set forth at www.stophazing.org, students in middle and high school are particularly vulnerable to peer pressure due to their need to belong, make friends, and find approval in a particular peer group.
- C. The term "hazing" includes but is not limited to:
1. Any type of physical brutality such as striking, paddling with a board, branding, electric shocking, sexual contact, or placing a harmful substance on a student's body.
 2. Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, restrictions on personal hygiene, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, public nudity, being forced to wear embarrassing or humiliating attire in public, calisthenics, personal servitude, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
 3. Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, tobacco, controlled substance (prescription medication not belonging to the student, synthetic or illegal drug), product or other food, liquid, or substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
 4. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame, or humiliation or that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school. This may include verbal abuse, such as yelling, swearing, and insulting the student.
 5. Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves violation of state or federal law or of a school district/charter school policy or a school regulation. This includes abuse or mistreatment of animals, public nudity, and theft.
- D. "Student Organization" as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.69, Subdivision 1(b) "means a group, club, or organization having students as its primary members or participants." It includes grade levels, classes, teams, activities, or particular school events. Hazing, as part of initiation into an athletic team or any other student organization, will not be tolerated. A student organization may include an unofficial school organization.
- E. The hazing policy applies to hazing that occurs before, during, or after school hours and on or off school premises. This includes weekends and non school days.

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. As set forth in Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.69, Subdivision 3, a district's hazing policy must include reporting procedures that enable students to report hazing and disciplinary consequences for violating the district's hazing policy.
- B. Any student who believes he or she has been the victim of hazing, or any student or

district staff person who has personally observed or has knowledge or belief that a student has been hazed, shall report the possible hazing immediately to the executive director.

- C. The executive director is responsible for receiving and investigating reports of hazing at the building level. Any person may report hazing directly to the human resources director or board of directors.
- D. School staff/contractors/volunteers or other employees of Lionsgate Academy shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events which might include hazing. Any person who receives a report of, observes, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall inform the executive director immediately.
- E. A student or school staff member who makes a good faith report of possible hazing will not face negative consequences, such as future employment, grades, or work assignments.

V. LIONSGATE ACADEMY ACTION

- A. When hazing is reported, the executive director or designee must either personally investigate the hazing report, or authorize a third party designated by the district to investigate the hazing report. Lionsgate Academy must ensure that the investigation begins within two school days of receipt of a hazing report or complaint.
- B. Lionsgate Academy may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, reporter, students, or others pending completion of an investigation of hazing.
- C. Upon completion of an investigation, Lionsgate Academy will take appropriate action against students/staff that planned, directed, encouraged, aided, or engaged in hazing. Lionsgate Academy action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, and other district policies and regulations.
- D. As required by Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.69, Subdivision 3, disciplinary consequences must be sufficiently severe to deter hazing and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior.
 - 1. For students involved in hazing, discipline may include, but is not limited to, removal from the extracurricular activity, out of school suspension, exclusion, or expulsion.
 - 2. For school staff/volunteers/contractors or other Lionsgate Academy employees involved in hazing, discipline may include, but is not limited to, written reprimand, suspension, termination, or discharge.
 - 3. In addition, Lionsgate Academy may also offer students/staff involved in the hazing incident the opportunity to participate in a face-to-face meeting with affected parties of the hazing with the intent to repair the harm caused by the hazing, to make amends, and to make a plan to work with athletic and extracurricular coaches to prevent future incidents of hazing and encourage a welcoming approach for incoming members to the athletic or extracurricular team/activity.

VI. RETALIATION

- A. Lionsgate Academy will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the district who retaliates against any person who:
 - 1. makes a good faith report of alleged hazing; or
 - 2. testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation or a proceeding or hearing relating to a hazing incident.
- B. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment.

VII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

- A. As required by Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.69, Subdivision 3, Lionsgate Academy's hazing policy will be printed in the student handbook on school policies. Lionsgate Academy's hazing policy will also be included in Lionsgate Academy's student and family handbook.

LEGAL REFERENCES AND RESOURCES:

Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.69

www.stophazing.org

High School Hazing, by Hank Nuwer (Watts, March 2000).