

Hazing
In The
Athletic Program

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Prescription for Success:
Comprehensive Programming & Policy
Teach
Enforce
Advocate
Model

Prescription for Success:
Comprehensive
Programming and Policy



DEFINITIONS OF HAZING

- 1) Maryland Anti-Hazing Law 268H “...any act or causing or any situation which recklessly or intentionally subjects a student to the risk of serious bodily injury for the purpose of initiation into a student organization of a school....” Penalty: \$500 fine and 6 months in jail.
- 2) Hazing as defined by Saint Vincent Pallotti High School: “Participation in any intentional or reckless act directed against another for the purpose of initiation into, affiliation with, or maintenance of membership in any school-sponsored activity, organization, club, or athletic team. This includes any action taken or situation created that directly or indirectly embarrasses, humiliates, harasses, ridicules, or causes harm, or mental or physical discomfort to another.”
- 3) As defined by the National Federation of High Schools: “Any humiliating or dangerous activity expected of a student to do before a group, regardless of their willingness to participate.”

FIVE EASY STEPS TO PREVENT HAZING IN YOUR ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT

Reasonable person perspective. Ask yourself if a reasonable person will deem a particular behavior or act acceptable. If so, then you can probably rest easier in allowing it. If you are not sure or you think something just is not quite right, you are better off erring on the caution of and prohibiting the behavior or act.

Be on the lookout. Telltale signs that hazing might be occurring include younger athletes with bruises inconsistent with a rough practice. Hangovers can

be a sign of other problems-forced alcohol consumption as part of a hazing ritual is one problem.

Use team leaders as buffers. These are your best sources when you are not available. Team leaders have the inside perspective on what is going on: they'll know! Encourage them to report signs of hazing, anonymously if necessary.

Provide alternatives. Hazing has long been considered a necessary evil to enhance team unity and chemistry. If there are traditions within your program that you want to eliminate, offering substitute activities will decrease the chance of the illegal hazing continuing. Obstacles and rope courses encourage working together and can be good tools.

Set down the rules, and then follow them. This should happen before the season starts. Outline what the rules are and what ramifications will be if they are broken. Most importantly, follow through on rendering punishments when violations do happen.

THE WARNING SIGNS

If you see a group where the "power differential" between the old and the new is great, this should be a warning. Watch out for groups where everyone is not equally respected and treated the same. The following activities are all examples but not limited to **HAZING**:

- ✚ Being verbally dressed
- ✚ Being publicly embarrassed
- ✚ Having to act as a personal servant to an older group member

- ✚ Being told to eat or forced to eat disgusting things such as cat food, tobacco sauce, raw eggs, etc.
- ✚ Being thrown or forced to go into a pond, ocean, toilet, or other body of water
- ✚ Pressured to be tattooed, body pierced, or shaven
- ✚ Participating in drinking contests
- ✚ Drinking excessively until you pass out
- ✚ Making prank phone calls or harassing others
- ✚ Destroying or vandalizing property
- ✚ Inflicting pain on yourself or others

HAZING IN ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

In athletic settings, some may view hazing as a harmless rite of initiation or an important activity for team bonding. However, it is actually a form of harassment and represents a Saint Vincent Pallotti High School Disciplinary Policy offense. A more complete explanation of harassment can be found in the Saint Vincent Pallotti High School Handbook.

Hazing, therefore, cannot and will not be condoned or permitted in the athletic program of Saint Vincent Pallotti High School. This means that HAZING is not tolerated in the fields or courts, in the locker rooms, on the bus, or at any other activity in which student-athletes represent Saint Vincent Pallotti High School.

The elimination of hazing from our athletic program will greatly enhance Saint Vincent Pallotti High School.

Goal 2: To create a Christian community, where all people can become all that God intends them to be.

"Our commitment to the pursuit of excellence by maintaining high standards for learning and behavior," as stated in the SVPHS handbook under page 8 under Statement of Philosophy.

RESOURCES

Athletic Management, "Hazing Hits Home," Laura Smith-June/July 2003

The Hazing Reader, Hank Nuwer, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 2004

High School Hazing: When Rites Become Rituals, Hank Nuwer, Grolier Press, NY, NY, 2000

www.Alfred.edu/news/html/hazingstudy99.html

www.espn.go.com/ot/hazing.monday.html

www.hazing.handnuwer.com

www.sportsparenting.org

www.stophazing.org

www.usafootball.com

NIAAA Hazing DVD: "Break the Tradition or Break the Law"