



Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District

113 Bowman Avenue
Port Chester, New York 10573
914.934.7913

www.portchesterschools.org

James Ryan
Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics

Re: Hazing, Student Harassment and Bullying

Consistent with provisions of Board of Education Policy 5305 & Policy 0115, please understand that hazing, student harassment and bullying are unacceptable in any way or under any circumstances. The following is provided to inform you of the serious nature of these events and the impact they may have on student-athletes should they be involved in them.

To promote a healthy lifestyle, it is recommended that student-athletes adhere to the school Code of Conduct at all times, not just during the sport season.

HAZING, STUDENT HARASSMENT, AND BULLYING – are **NOT** permitted under any circumstances

It is the position of the Port Chester Public Schools that no person be subjected to harassment while on district property or while involved in a district related activity. All forms of harassment, such as “hazing, harassment, or bullying” as defined in this document, are particularly troublesome and deserve special attention. Hazing or bullying activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and are prohibited at all times.

What is hazing? “Hazing” is defined as any behavior exhibited by students or other persons towards students arising in the context of so-called initiation rites for new club or team members, or students new to a school or the district, or activities of a similar nature, whose intent or effect is to degrade, demean, humiliate, place at risk of physical or emotional harm, cause physical or emotional harm, or place at risk of punishment by school or civil authorities.

Examples of hazing include, but are not limited to the following:

- Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking or placing a harmful substance on the body.
- Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, rigorous calisthenics 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.
- Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, drug, tobacco product, or any other food, liquid, or substance that subjects the students to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
- Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school or in the club, team or activity involved.
- Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves a violation of state or federal law or regulation, or of the school district’s policies and/or regulations.

What is bullying? Under the amended Dignity for All Students Act, bullying and harassment are equivalent and used interchangeably. In order to facilitate implementation, provide meaningful guidance and prevent behaviors

from rising to a violation of law, bullying is further understood to be a hostile activity which harms or induces fear through the threat of further aggression and/or creates terror. Bullying may be premeditated or a sudden activity. It may be subtle or easy to identify, done by one person or a group. Bullying often includes the following characteristics:

1. **Power imbalance** - occurs when a bully uses his/her physical or social power over a target.
2. **Intent to harm** - the bully seeks to inflict physical or emotional harm and/or takes pleasure in this activity.
3. **Threat of further aggression** - the bully and the target believe the bullying will continue.
4. **Terror** - when any bullying increases, it becomes a "systematic violence or harassment used to intimidate and maintain dominance."

There are at least three kinds of bullying: verbal, physical and social/relational.

- Verbal bullying (which can be delivered orally, electronically or in writing) includes name calling, insulting remarks, verbal teasing, frightening phone calls, violent threats, extortion, taunting, gossip, spreading rumors, racist slurs, anonymous notes, etc.
- Physical bullying includes poking, slapping, hitting, tripping or causing a fall, choking, kicking, punching, biting, pinching, scratching, spitting, twisting arms or legs, damaging clothes and personal property, or threatening gestures.
- Social or relational bullying includes excluding someone from a group, isolating, shunning, spreading rumors or gossiping, arranging public humiliation, undermining relationships, teasing about clothing, looks, giving dirty looks, aggressive stares, etc.

What is harassment? The Dignity for All Students Act defines harassment as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying, that (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property. The harassing behavior may be based on any characteristic, including but not limited to a person's actual or perceived:

- race,
- color,
- weight,
- national origin,
- ethnic group,
- religion,
- religious practice,
- disability,
- sex,
- sexual orientation, or
- gender (including gender identity and expression).
- Gender identity is one's self-conception as being male or female, as distinguished from actual biological sex or sex assigned at birth.

- Gender expression is the manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice or mannerisms.

Consequences

A student who hazes, harasses, or bullies another student may lose the privilege of playing a sport for Port Chester. Any student who is found to have participated in a hazing, harassing or bullying activity will be subject to suspension for all or part of the sports season in which the incident occurred. In addition, that student may be prohibited from participating during other sports in other seasons. In certain circumstances, more severe consequences may be warranted under the district code of conduct and pursuant to school district policies.