

# Diocese of Trenton Catholic Schools Anti-Hazing Policy

## I. Policy Statement

The Diocese of Trenton is committed to maintaining school communities that are safe, inclusive, and grounded in the dignity of each person as created in the image of God. Hazing, in any form, is contrary to Catholic teaching and is strictly prohibited within all diocesan schools. This includes hazing that occurs on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, online or through social media platforms, or off-campus when connected to the school community. No student, teacher, coach, employee, or volunteer may engage in, condone, or ignore hazing activities. All reports of hazing will be taken seriously and addressed in accordance with applicable laws and diocesan policies.

## II. Definition of Hazing

In accordance with New Jersey's "Timothy J. Piazza's Law" (2022), *hazing* is defined as:

"Knowingly or recklessly causing, coercing, or forcing another person to engage in conduct that places them at risk of bodily, emotional, or psychological harm for the purpose of initiating, affiliating, holding office, or maintaining status in a group, team, or organization."

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse (e.g., whipping, beating, branding, forced exercise)
- Forced consumption of food, alcohol, or substances
- Sleep deprivation or social isolation
- Public humiliation or ridicule
- Coerced criminal, immoral, or demeaning acts

*Note: A person's consent to hazing does not absolve responsibility or mitigate disciplinary consequences.*

## III. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all:

- Students (grades Pre-K–12)
- Faculty, staff, and coaches
- Volunteers and affiliated school personnel
- School-sanctioned student groups (e.g., clubs, athletic teams, honor societies)

## IV. Reporting Procedures

Any individual—student, parent, staff member, or community member—who witnesses or suspects hazing should report it immediately to the school principal or designated school official.

Anonymous reports may be made, and retaliation against reporters is strictly prohibited. The school will:

- Follow diocesan policy
- Promptly investigate all reports
- Notify diocesan leadership as appropriate
- Involve law enforcement where required by law
- Provide support to affected students

## **V. Disciplinary Actions**

If hazing is confirmed, disciplinary measures will be applied in proportion to the severity of the offense and may include:

- Detention, suspension, or expulsion (students)
- Suspension or dismissal (employees/coaches)
- Disbandment of student organizations involved
- Notification to law enforcement where applicable

## **VI. Medical Amnesty**

A student who seeks medical assistance for someone experiencing a hazing-related emergency, and meets the criteria outlined in state law (remaining on scene, cooperating with authorities), may be granted immunity from certain disciplinary or legal penalties.

## **VII. Education and Prevention**

To cultivate a culture of respect and accountability, diocesan schools shall:

- Provide annual training on hazing prevention for faculty, staff, and students in grades 6–12
- Clearly communicate this policy to all members of the school community including faculty, staff, coaches and volunteers
- Post the full anti-hazing policy on each school's public website

## **VIII. Recordkeeping and Transparency**

Schools will:

- Document all reported hazing incidents
- Share reports with the Diocesan Department of Catholic Schools

## **IX. Catholic Identity and Formation**

As Catholic schools, we believe that every student is called to treat others with dignity and compassion. Hazing contradicts Gospel values and our shared mission of forming disciples of Christ.