

RESOURCE DOCUMENT FOR HAZING PREVENTION

In response to the 2024 Virginia General Assembly Legislative Session, VDOE has compiled a guidance document to make resources available to local school boards.



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BACKGROUND

HB719/SB379 from the 2024 General Assembly Legislative Session requires the Board of Education to develop *Standards of Learning* and curriculum guidelines for research-based hazing prevention instruction to be provided as a part of physical or health education instruction provided to students in 9th or 10th grade. The bill requires hazing prevention instruction to include age-appropriate, extensive, and current education about hazing, including (i) examples of hazing; (ii) the dangers of hazing, including the consequences of alcohol intoxication; and (iii) school policies and laws related to hazing, including criminal penalties and bystander intervention. The bill requires research-based hazing prevention instruction to be offered in-person but requires each school board to provide options for virtual participation for any student who is enrolled in an online or virtual physical or health education program. Finally, the bill requires each school board to provide research-based hazing prevention instruction beginning with the school year following the Board's adoption of revised *Standards of Learning* for physical and health education for 9th or 10th graders. The bill directs the Virginia Board of Education to, in the intermediary time, develop and post on its website guidance documents for the purpose of making such research-based hazing prevention instruction available to local school boards.

The *Standards of Learning* are reviewed on a 7-year review cycle. The Health Standards are scheduled to be reviewed again in 2027 and the Physical Education Standards are scheduled to be reviewed in 2029. Implementation of each set of standards will be the year following review and Board approval. Upon approval of the updated *Standards of Learning*, local school boards will offer research-based hazing prevention instruction (in-person instruction with virtual option) as part of the health and physical education courses in grades 9 or 10 beginning in the school year following the Board of Education's adoption of the revised *Standards of Learning* for physical and health education.

In the interim, this guidance document is being provided to school divisions to make such research-based hazing prevention instruction available to school boards.

INTRODUCTION

Hazing Definition and School Board Responsibilities

The Code of Virginia [§ 18.2-56](#) defines hazing as “to recklessly or intentionally endanger the health or safety of a student or students or to inflict bodily injury on a student or students in connection with or for the purpose of initiation, admission into or affiliation with or as a condition for continued membership in a club, organization, association, fraternity, sorority, or student body regardless of whether the student or students so endangered or injured participated voluntarily in the relevant activity.”

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia [§ 22.1-279.9](#), “all school boards shall develop, in cooperation with the local law-enforcement agencies, juvenile and domestic relations district court judges, and personnel, parents, and the community at large, programs to prevent violence and crime on

school property and at school-sponsored events, which shall include research-based hazing prevention.”

The Code of Virginia [§ 22.1-279.6](#) outlines that school boards shall include prohibitions against hazing in its code of conduct. Acts of hazing imposes a Class 1 misdemeanor penalty for violations.

PURPOSE

Hazing Prevention Resources

The purpose of this document is to provide access to available resources which may be used to offer research-based hazing prevention instruction in local school divisions. The Virginia Department of Education has collected a list of resources currently available for local school boards to review for the purpose of making such research-based hazing prevention instruction available to local school boards.

- [Animated Hazing Video Resource](#)- This is an animated video intended to inform parents or guardians of students in grades K-12 about hazing and encourages conversation between students and their parents or guardians. All resources were produced in partnership with the Virginia Department of Education, WHRO, and the Gordie Center.
- [#GoOpenVA Love Like Adam Open Resources](#)- Hazing Awareness and Prevention Resources created by the Love Like Adam Foundation, including lesson plans linked to current 2020 Virginia Health *Standards of Learning* and *Death of a Pledge: The Adam Oakes Story*, a documentary film.
- [HazingPrevention.Org](#)- Offers educational resources, prevention tools, training programs, and steps and strategies for creating a hazing prevention plan.
- [StopHazing](#)- Provides research, resources, strategies to prevent hazing, and offers a comprehensive guide for college administrators, including policy recommendations and training programs.
- [National Collaborative for Hazing Research and Prevention](#)- Conducts research and offers resources on hazing prevention and intervention.
- [The Gordie Center](#)- Offers educational programs and resources focusing on hazing prevention and substance abuse.
- [Campus Safety Magazine](#)- Articles and guidelines on preventing hazing on college campuses.
- [Step UP! Bystander Intervention Program](#)- Focuses on empowering individuals to prevent hazing through bystander intervention.
- [Green Dot Bystander Intervention](#)- Provides training programs to help prevent hazing and other forms of violence.
- [National Center for Victims of Crime](#)- Provides support and resources for victims of hazing.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Hazing Prevention Resources

The [2021 Model Guidance for Positive, Preventive Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension](#) promotes a vision for improving conditions for learning so that all students experience a safe, supportive school environment. The 2021 Model Guidance provides references to relevant Code of Virginia statutes ([Code of Virginia § 22.1-279.6](#)) and includes resources for developing alternatives to suspension. According to § 22.1-279.6.B:

- School boards shall adopt and revise, as required by [§ 22.1-253.13:7](#), regulations on codes of student conduct that are consistent with, but may be more stringent than, the guidelines of the Board of Education.
- School boards shall include in the regulations on codes of student conduct procedures for suspension, expulsion, and exclusion decisions and **shall biennially review the model student conduct code** to incorporate discipline options and alternatives to preserve a safe, nondisruptive environment for effective teaching and learning.

Local school board policies should be consistent with, but may be more stringent than, the guidelines and model policies of the Board of Education. The implementation of the Model Guidance requires a prevention-based mindset for the focus on student code of conduct.

As it pertains to hazing, local school boards, in accordance with [Va. Code 22.1-279.6.B](#), are required to prohibit hazing, and to cite "the provisions of [Va. Code 18.2-56](#) which defines and prohibits hazing and imposes a Class 1 misdemeanor penalty for violations; i.e., confinement in jail for not more than 12 months and a fine of not more than \$2500, either or both." This information can also be found on page 82 in the [2021 Model Guidance for Positive, Preventive Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension](#).

In addition, the Model Guidance places the behavior of hazing in Category E: Behaviors that Endanger Self or Others (BESO). Behaviors in this category endanger the health, safety, and/or welfare of either the student or others in the school community. The recommended response to behavior that meets the definition of hazing in [Va. Code §18.2-56](#) is a level 5 response. Level 5 responses are reserved for those behaviors that require a referral to the superintendent or designee and include any of the following actions.

- Threat Assessment
- Referral to Law Enforcement
- Long Term Suspension
- Alternative Placement
- Expulsion
- School Reassignment
- Return the Student to the School Setting with Appropriate Supports and Interventions

Appropriate behavioral interventions, instructional supports, and recommendations from the Threat Assessment should accompany any response to hazing.

For additional support and guidance, divisions may contact vdoe.stem@doe.virginia.gov.