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Eton Academy Anti-Hazing Policy

Purpose:

As a coach, I have realized that our athletics program or any other program at our school does not have an anti-hazing policy. We do have a student code of conduct that is enforced that the students must follow, but there is no hazing section included in the code and there needs to be. Yes, we are a small school and this issue has never been brought to our attention before, but we cannot be blind and just ignore it. We must be prepared on how to deal with it if it does occur, become more educated about the subject, and be prepared to hand out the consequences accordingly.

We need to be extra vigilant as coaches, teachers and administrators to become more educated on this subject and how to protect our students and athletes from this behavior. This is vital at a school like ours, with different learners, because a majority of our students have had social issues and troubles, like bullying and feeling isolated at previous schools. They come to Eton to feel protected, safe and accepted by a group. It is because of this that they are more at risk to try or experience “hazing” behaviors so they can finally feel like they belong and are accepted. This is why an anti-hazing policy is so important and needs to be a part of our athletic program.

Definition of Hazing:

As of right now there is not an official definition of hazing at Eton Academy and there needs to be. With a concise and accurate definition, we can inform our students, athletes, staff and parents what it is and what to look out for. Also with a definition in place it will be much easier to hold people accountable for their actions, so the proper consequences can be handed out.

Hazing is often related to the initiation or admission to a particular group or team, but it is unacceptable and not tolerated at Eton Academy. At Eton hazing is defined as any action or situation taken by an individual or group, against another individual or group, which does not contribute to the positive development of a person; which inflicts or intends to inflict physical or mental harm or discomfort that may demean, disgrace, or degrade any person regardless of location, intent or consent of the participants. Hazing also includes leading, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts.

What Is Acceptable:

Sometimes it can be confusing or unclear on what is acceptable or unacceptable when it comes to hazing. Hazing does not include any activity or conduct that appropriately furthers the goals laid out by our athletics program. The main goals of the Eton Academy athletic program are to improve our athletes both physically and mentally, build a sense of team pride and to provide a safe and nurturing environment.

Below are acceptable practices that occur in Eton Athletics:

- Reasonable training exercises to increase cardiovascular endurance
 - Sprints, jogging, line taps, etc.
- Participating in required community service events
 - Going to Gleaners Food Bank
 - Participating in the Salvation Army Giving Tree
 - Raking Leaves for Seniors in our Community
- Helping coaches set up for games or carry equipment
 - The whole team participates in the act
 - No one group is specifically designated to do the task
- Team building activities or retreats
 - Team camps
 - Ropes course

All of the above examples provide our students an opportunity to improve themselves both physically and mentally. These opportunities that we provide are to make our students not only better athletes, but also all around better people for their society.

What Is Unacceptable:

Hazing is unacceptable at Eton Academy and will not be tolerated. Again the definition of hazing includes any action or situation which inflicts or intends to inflict physical or mental harm or discomfort that may demean, disgrace, or degrade any person regardless of location, intent or consent of the participants.

It can include but is not limited to the following:

- Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, pushing, or other similar activity.
- Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, or other activity that creates or results in an unreasonable risk of harm or that negatively affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student/athlete.
- Any activity involving consumption of food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance that subjects a student/athlete to an unreasonable risk of harm.
- Any type of verbal harassment like swearing, cursing, shouting, at new members of the team.
- Conducting any type of initiation week for new members of the team.

The above examples are given to help coaches, parents and staff understand and what to look for when it comes to hazing. Also it sets up specific guidelines for our students and athletes to follow.

Disciplinary Actions and Punishments:

As a coach, if hazing actions from the above list or any other occur, strict disciplinary actions and punishments need to take place. If a coach suspects that a possible hazing situation has occurred, an investigation of all parties involved must take place. If the action or situation is found unacceptable, disciplinary actions and punishments need to occur.

Below are listed the punishments that would occur if an instance of hazing was found to be true. These punishments would be handed out by the coach first, then turned over to the administration and if need be the authorities. It is very important to take these hazing policies seriously, so it is known that hazing is an unacceptable part of our program.

As a coach:

- If an individual or small group was suspected of hazing after the coach's investigation, they would be suspended from the team immediately until further notice. The information would then be handed over to the administration for a more detailed investigation. From here the student could be kicked off the team, expelled from athletics, expelled from school, or handed over to the authorities.
- If the entire athletic team was suspected of hazing after the coach's investigation, they would be suspended from team play until further notice. The information would then be handed over to the administration for a more detailed investigation. From here the team could be suspended for the entire season, expelled from the athletic program or school and the matter could be handed over to the authorities.
- If any member of the athletic staff was suspected of hazing after the coach's investigation, they would be suspended from the athletics program immediately until further notice. The information would then be handed over to the administration for a more detailed investigation. From here the staff member could be expelled from the athletics program or handed over to the authorities.

Again, the beginning consequences and the investigation need to be taken by the coach and then immediately handed over to the administrators of the school. If the administrators find the allegations to be false or inconsistent, the student may be allowed back on the team under the coach's discretion. The coach can require further disciplinary actions of community service, a written apology to the individual that was hazed and to the team, or possibly sitting out the entire season.

If in the process the matter is handed over to the authorities, listed below are the hazing violations according to Michigan law.

Hazing Violations according to Michigan Law:

- If physical injury, the person is guilty of misdemeanor and can be jailed and fined.
- If impairment of bodily function, the person is guilty of felony and can be sent to prison (5 years) and fined (\$2500).
- If death occurs, the person is guilty of felony and can be sent to prison (15 years) and fined (\$10,000).

Reporting Hazing:

Being a coach, you have to be vigilant and aware of what is going on with your team in and out of the locker room, but you cannot be there for everything and something might slip by you. So that is why it is important for you to inform others on how to report hazing if they suspect it or if they see it occur. They can either do it in person or anonymously.

If a person suspects that hazing is going on, one option is for them to report the incident in person to the coach. At any time, a player, parent or staff member can come to the coach and report their suspicion of hazing. The person will be required to fill out some paper work that includes the following questions:

- What team(s) are you reporting for these acts of hazing?
- How did you become aware of the event(s)?
- Who was involved in this event?
- Are there any other people that either were present or can corroborate the information you are providing? Please provide their names and contact information (if available).
- Where did the event(s) take place?
- When did the event(s) occur?
- Please describe the event(s) in as much detail as possible.
- Include name and telephone number

Or if they would like to do it anonymously, the paper will be available outside the coaches' offices or they can send it by email. People reporting hazing incidences need to be reminded that if it is done anonymously and legal actions need to be taken, it may lessen the chance of a conviction.

Steps We Will Take to Prevent Hazing:

- Annual parent and athlete meeting at the beginning of the year to inform our athletic community of our anti-hazing policies and procedures.
- Each year, anti-hazing classes will be held to inform our athletes and parents about the issue. These classes will include guest speakers with personal stories about how their lives have been changed by hazing.
 - Breakout sessions and further team meetings with the coach will occur throughout the season
- During practice coaches will always be vigilant watching for any signs of hazing that may have occurred.

- Coaches will look for students that are withdrawn or a major change has occurred, like appearance or mood.
- Coaches will discourage groups from forming within the team to prevent any hierarchy, and anyone feeling left out.
- Provide exit interviews for students that were cut, decided to leave the team or exiting seniors.
 - By providing these interviews, the above students are more likely to offer up information about the program if they have no affiliation with it.
- When picking team captains, they will always be responsible, understanding, good role models and leaders that fully believe and understand our athletic program and the anti-hazing policy. So if anything would occur, they would come forth with information.
 - By having leaders that other students look up to and trust, it will have a positive impact on the others.
- Coaches, staff, and other athletic personnel will continuously be educated about the subject of hazing.
 - Yearly trainings and quarterly meetings will take place to inform the athletic staff on the latest news and information about hazing.
 - Also the meetings and trainings will allow coaches to share information and maybe some possible warning signs to look out for.

Bulldog Creed of PRIDE:

To help build a sense of unity in our athletic program, and to deter hazing, the following creed of PRIDE will be followed by all of our student athletes:

P- Participation

- Athletes must participate in all scheduled games or practices. If a student must miss a practice or game, the student must inform the coach or a parent email or call to the coach must be made.
- Athletes will attend all community service events scheduled by the team
 - i.e. Gleaners, Giving Tree, Raking Leaves
- Athletes will not participate or partake in any hazing activities described in our anti-hazing policy.

R- Respect

- During games and practices students will use respectful language to their teammates and opposing players.
- All athletes have various skill levels and each of them will be respected by their teammates.
- Athletes will respect and comply with decisions made by the coach
- Athletes will respect calls and decisions made by game officials.

I- Independence

- If a student is going to miss a practice or a game they must let the coach know. Either by them telling the coach themselves or a parent phone call or email.
- Each athlete will be responsible for their uniform. They must bring it to every game and return it back to the athletic director at the end of the season.
- If a student has a question or concern the student will ask the coach or athletic director to address it.

D- Disciplined

- Every athlete will follow practice and game day rules.
- Every athlete will respect and follow all rules laid out by the athletic program.

E- Effort

- At each practice or game, every athlete will perform to the best of their ability.
- Athletes will engage in positive behavior and actions that do not hinder other player's performances.

Where to Look for this Information:

This anti-hazing policy will be directly located outside of the athletic coach's offices, inside the school office, carried with all coaches at all times, and should be posted inside the local school board offices

Resources:

The following resources were used to help develop this anti-hazing policy for Eton Academy.

The Florida State University (2011). *Division of Student Affairs, Community Website on Hazing*. Retrieved from <http://hazing.fsu.edu>

Atkinson, R. (2011). *Specific Areas of Responsibility for the Coach* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://angel.msu.edu>