

2026 -- H 7003

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Representatives McNamara, Shekarchi, Ackerman, Casey, Solomon,
Morales, Paplauskas, Hopkins, Fascia, and Boylan
Date Introduced: January 07, 2026

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils" is
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:
- 3 **16-21-44. Policy on addressing and prohibiting hazing in student athletics.**
- 4 (a) The department of elementary and secondary education (the "department"), in
5 conjunction with the Rhode Island interscholastic league (the "interscholastic league"), shall
6 establish an anti-hazing policy (hereinafter "policy") to address acts of hazing in student athletics.
7 The guiding principle behind this policy is that hazing, bullying and harassment have no place in
8 any school environment. This policy shall incorporate best practices as determined by the
9 department and the interscholastic league. This policy shall also establish zero tolerance for hazing
10 and ensure discipline for hazing incidents is transparent and consistently applied across the state.
- 11 (b) This policy shall include the following:
- 12 (1) Definitions and illustrations of hazing:
- 13 (2) Sanctions and penalties to be imposed on students and student-athletes who engage in
14 hazing incidents, which penalties may include, but are not limited to, suspension from a team, the
15 periods of such suspension, and where appropriate, team-level consequences, which may include
16 the cancelation of a team's season;
- 17 (3) The recognition that consent by a person being subjected to an act of hazing is not a
18 defense under this section;
- 19 (4) Education and prevention components that incorporate the opportunity to connect with

1 any emerging statewide efforts around school climate, anti-bullying, and anti-hate initiatives in
2 Rhode Island schools; and

3 (5) A requirement that each student-athlete subject to this policy shall, prior to attending
4 any team practices, meetings, games, or other functions, sign an acknowledgement and recognition
5 that a violation of the policy may result in the imposition of penalties and sanctions. This document
6 may be a separate acknowledgement or combined with other documents student-athletes are
7 required to sign as a condition of participation.

8 (d) The department and the league shall use best practices to establish a comprehensive
9 definition for hazing. By way of guidance, and not as a limitation, the definition of hazing should
10 include as an element, the imposition or activity of humiliating, degrading, abusing, or endangering
11 a person, often in the context of a group setting.

12 (e) Every school and school district participating within the Rhode Island interscholastic
13 league shall be subject to the provisions of this section and the anti-hazing policy.

14 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

- 1 This act would direct the department of elementary and secondary education, in
2 conjunction with the Rhode Island interscholastic league, to promulgate rules and regulations to
3 address, minimize, and establish an anti-hazing policy for acts of hazing in student athletics.
4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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