

Hazing Policy Statement & Prevention Plan

Purpose

Heartland Welding Academy is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and welcoming learning environment. Hazing undermines student dignity, disrupts the educational environment, and can cause severe physical and psychological harm. This policy applies to all students, regardless of the lack of formal clubs, sports teams, or student organizations. Peer-to-peer initiation rituals of any kind have no place in our community.

Definition of Hazing:

Hazing is defined as any method of initiation, pastime, or amusement in a student group or peer circle that intentionally or recklessly endangers a student's physical health, mental health, or safety.

Because HWA does not host formal organizations, hazing under this policy specifically includes, but is not limited to:

- **Informal Group Initiations:** Any requirement imposed by a student or group of students to "earn" entry, acceptance, or status into a social circle, clique, or informal peer group.
- **Coerced Actions:** Pressuring a student to consume unwanted food, alcohol, drugs, or foreign substances.
- **Humiliation & Harassment:** Subjecting a student to public ridicule, sleep deprivation, verbal abuse, or degrading tasks to be accepted by peers.
- **Digital Hazing:** Using social media, group chats, or online forums to mock, test, or exclude students as a form of social initiation or rite of passage.

Note: A student's willingness to participate or give "consent" to hazing activities is not a defense. Hazing is strictly prohibited regardless of whether the victim participated voluntarily.

Reportable Hazing Behaviors and Actions

- **Physical Harm & Assault:** Whipping, beating, striking, electronic shocking, or placing harmful substances on the body.
- **Deprivation & Confinement:** Causing or coercing sleep deprivation, exposure to elements, or confinement in small spaces.
- **Physical Exhaustion:** Forcing extreme calisthenics or rigorous physical tasks.
- **Forced Consumption:** Inducing or coercing the consumption of food, liquids, alcohol, drugs, or other substances.
- **Sexual Violations:** Coercing or inducing another person to perform sexual acts or simulations.
- **Intimidation & Fear:** Using threatening words or conduct to place someone in reasonable fear of bodily harm.
- **Breaking the Law:** Requiring or inducing a person to perform any duty or task that violates local, state, tribal, or federal law. [[1](#), [2](#)]

Where Policy applies

This policy applies to behavior that occurs:

- On HWA property or during the school day.
- Traveling to or from school.
- Off-campus if the conduct directly disrupts the safe, orderly, and respectful environment of the school, or impacts a student's ability to learn.

Reporting Procedures and Resources

HWA thrives when students look out for one another.

How to Report: Any student who experiences, witnesses, or suspects hazing should immediately report the incident to their instructor

Anonymous Reporting: Reports can also be submitted anonymously via Complaint & Grievance Forms located in classrooms

Retaliation Prohibited: Retaliation against any individual who reports hazing, suspects hazing, or cooperates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate suspension or expulsion.

Upon receiving a report, the Managing Director will initiate a formal administrative review:

1. **Interim Measures:** HWA may implement immediate safety measures, including changing class schedules or issuing no-contact orders, to protect the reporting student.
2. **Fact-Finding:** A designated staff member will interview witnesses and review any digital or physical evidence.
3. **Standard of Evidence:** Disciplinary decisions will be based on a preponderance of the evidence (whether it is more likely than not that the violation occurred).

Disciplinary Action

Students found in violation of this policy face severe disciplinary action, up to and including:

- **Disciplinary Write up:** Formal notation on the student's record.
- **Suspension:** Immediate removal from classes and campus for a designated period of time. (School imposed Leave of Absence)
- **Termination:** Permanent separation from HWA with a permanent transcript notation.
- **Legal Referral:** The institution will report acts that constitute criminal assault, battery, or statutory hazing to local law enforcement.

State Law Overlay and Criminal Penalties

In addition to institutional sanctions, hazing is a criminal offense under Kansas Law K.S.A 21-5418. This law defines hazing as recklessly coercing or encouraging another person to perform acts risking great bodily harm or death as a condition of membership, classified as a Class B nonperson misdemeanor.

The legal consequences include:

Criminal Penalties

For a Class B misdemeanor conviction, a judge can impose:

- **Jail Time:** Up to **six months** in a county jail.
- **Fines:** A financial penalty of up to **\$1,000**.
- **Probation:** A period of court-ordered supervision, often combined with mandatory community service or drug/alcohol rehabilitation

If the hazing actually **results in physical injury or death**, charges can be escalated to felony, which could include;

- Aggravated battery (Felony)
- Reckless endangerment (Misdemeanor or Felony)
- Involuntary manslaughter or murder (High-level Felonies if a death occurs)

Research-Informed Prevention and Awareness Programs

To proactively combat hazing, HWA mandates research-informed hazing prevention and awareness programming.

- **Mandatory Training:** All incoming students are educated on the hazing policy during student orientation; and the policy is made available along with the annual Clery notification
- **Employee Training:** Faculty and staff receive training on recognizing the signs of hazing, intervention strategies, and mandatory Clery reporting duties.
- **Continuous Education:** Prevention programs are evaluated annually

Public Campus Hazing Transparency Report

In accordance with federal requirements, HWA maintains a standalone, public **Campus Hazing Transparency Report** on its website at **[Insert Exact Web URL]**. This report is updated at least twice per year (by **October 1 and April 1**) and details all findings of HWA's anti-hazing policy violations over the past five years.

Hazing Transparency Report

Summary

In accordance with federal safety regulations and Kansas state legislation, this Campus hazing Transparency Report provides a public account of all reported and investigated hazing allegations at Heartland Welding Academy. Even in the absence of traditional campus housing, student organizations, Greek life, or sports, our institution remains dedicated to complete transparency regarding informal group dynamics, academic cohort gatekeeping, and peer to peer misconduct.

This report is updated bi-annually and maintained on the institution’s website. It covers all reported incidents occurring on HWA property, off property if in direct connection with student(s), or through digital channels.

Log of investigated incidents

The following lists all allegations or formal complaints of hazing received by the institution. Under federal law, the identity of victims, whistle blowers, and accused individuals must be redacted to comply with FERPA.

Date reported	Nature of allegation	Status/outcome	Disciplinary/Legal Action
No issues to report in 2024			
No issues to report In 2025			

Reporting Definitions

Nature of allegation: categorized by the primary setting of incident (informal initiation, coerced action, humiliation & harassment, digital hazing)

Investigation outcome: determined based on preponderance of evidence standard which means the claim is more than likely to be true based on the evidence presented

Disciplinary action: response from institution ranging from suspension to criminal referral to law enforcement

Access & Compliance Verification

This report satisfies public right to know provisions and is posted in an accessible format on the institutions website within 15 days of any final determination.

Historical Data

To comply with long term reporting provisions HWA tracks year over year aggregate reports to identify systemic behavioral trends.

Academic Year	# of reports As of 4/1	# of reports As of 10/1	Formal Investigations	Policy violations	Law enforce. referrals
2024/2025	0	0			
2025/2026	0	0			
2026/2027	0	0			
2027/2028					