

Dear parents/guardians and students,

I want to start by simply saying I truly believe it takes an entire village to raise a child. We are all part of that village; students, parents, teachers, administrators, politicians, etc. Being a parent is one of the toughest jobs but also one of the most rewarding.

Each year, East sends information to our community about some of the larger issues that are of concern to all of us in the community. As you may have heard, an inappropriate, long-standing community tradition has reared its ugly head again this year. Every year, we send information out about incoming 12th grade students shaving the heads of incoming 9th grade students. As is always pointed out, this is not only inappropriate; it is WRONG. As a school and district, we have identified the head shaving as hazing, which is dealt with as a Safe School Violation.

I am saddened every year when I see a student with a shaved head, knowing they may have been brutalized and emotionally injured. All in the name of "belonging." When administrators investigate, it worries us even more that the victims, and often their parents, are unwilling to share their experiences or talk about who took part in the hazing. At times, those parents have moved their students to a different school rather than identify who had shaved their child's head. When we believe we know who was involved, it has proven almost impossible to address with the perpetrators, because we lack enough information and/or many of their parents see this as a "rite of passage" or "tradition" which "does not involve the school." Rather than people coming to the table to help teach kids that it is wrong, adults push it deeper underground to avoid or prevent consequences. Traditions should NEVER lead to injury (physical, emotional or otherwise) or bullying of any sort and should not ever determine if someone "belongs" or is "cool."

To students and parents, we are asking you to please share with us if you have been a victim this year. If you are a parent of a senior, please exercise your responsibility as a parent and community member to stop this. Whether you personally agree or not, we are saying this has a negative impact on other students, the school, and the larger community, and it must end now, PERIOD.

Below, I have included the message we send each year. It addresses more of the consequences.

Recently, the Utah State Legislature modified the laws related to the bullying, cyberbullying, and hazing of students, and we have updated our policies and procedures to reflect those statutory changes. What has not changed is our commitment to providing a safe learning environment to all students, which includes ensuring that students are free from bullying, cyberbullying, and hazing. The district has strict policies against these behaviors as they endanger the mental and/or physical health and safety of our students. Events that may seem minor in nature can have long-lasting, harmful effects on students. One of these hazing events we have struggled with in the past, and which is considered bullying and/or

hazing, is head shaving of younger students. One particular concern has been for incoming 9th grade students who were being shaved by older high school students. It is important to note that any/all allegations of bullying, cyberbullying, and hazing are investigated and screened for

potential discipline. It is also important to note that students who participate in hazing, in any way, and who are also interested in participating in UHSAA sanctioned extracurricular activities, will not be eligible to do so for that current or upcoming academic year. East High School head coaches support this stance on hazing. The UHSAA is very clear in its opposition to bullying and hazing. Please also recognize that hazing can occur regardless of whether a student consented or submitted to the conduct, and our policies apply to both on-campus and off-campus conduct.

Our ability to stop inappropriate behavior increases dramatically when we work together to report and stop these behaviors early on. For more information on how to stop hazing, you can visit www.stophazing.org or www.hazingprevention.org. For more information on bullying, cyberbullying, or hazing, you can visit www.stopbullying.gov. If you have information about an incident that may have occurred, please report the matter to your school administration and principal. You may also contact the district's Executive Director of Policy & Legal Services, Kristina Kindl, at 801-578-8432.

A copy of the Salt Lake City School District procedures can be found here:

<http://www.slcschools.org/policies/documents/G-20AP.pdf>

Thank you for your cooperation as we work to prevent bullying of our students. Please reach out to me if you have questions or information regarding bullying of any sort involving East High School students.

Sincerely,

Greg Maughan

Principal

East High School