

**Des parents d'élèves manitobains  
dénoncent les rites d'initiation violents  
Manitoba parents want end to hazing ritual**  
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THE PAS, MAN. -- Parents of Grade 9 boys say they want a hazing ritual by older teens at a local high school to stop, but they say fear of retribution is keeping victims from speaking up. First-year students at Margaret Barbour Collegiate in The Pas, Man., are typically beaten on the buttocks with paddles, hockey goalie sticks or two-by-fours in the ritual, a tradition parents fear will continue when school starts Sept. 7.

A Grade 12 student and two Grade 11 students went after her son on his first day of high school two years ago, Sharon Sutton said. "They said, 'You either show up at this address, or we'll find you and do it worse,' " she said. "I told the high school who had done it, but [the victims] didn't want to come forward," Ms. Sutton said. "If they do say anything, they have to live with it for four years in the high school."

Those who try to run away have been chased by cars and suffered worse beatings. Some have been dragged into vehicles and driven to back roads for their beatings, parents say. Kelsey School Division superintendent Al Gardner said the division will suspend hazers for up to an entire semester and RCMP are ready to lay criminal charges.

Speaking anonymously through an intermediary, several teachers at the school told the Winnipeg Free Press they welcome the attention the hazing attacks are getting because they want the problem wiped out. The teachers said the victims aren't the weak or vulnerable students who typically get bullied, but the most popular and athletic Grade 8 graduates.

Christine Whitbread said that when her son came outside after school, several youths were waiting for him. "They had balaclavas on and were waving paddles." Her son went back into the school and called her to come and get him, Ms. Whitbread said. "He was petrified; I had to drive him to and from school for a week. Parents said that boys who are victims later become abusers. Now, there's also talk of "swirling" girls -- sticking their heads or hands in the toilet and flushing.

None of the women's sons was willing to be interviewed. Some educators blame the movie *School Daze*, which they said glorified paddling of students as a hazing ritual that was a regular part of school life. Mr. Gardner said that the principal of Margaret Barbour Collegiate called two Grade 9 students in last year after hearing they had been victims of paddling, but that the two denied anything had happened.