

LONG ISLAND / SUFFOLK

Judge dismisses suit alleging threats, bullying on East Hampton school's South America trip



A judge has dismissed a lawsuit against the Ross School that claimed a 17-year-old junior was threatened and bullied last year on a field trip to South America. Credit: Stephanie Craig

By Matthew Chayes

matthew.chayes@newsday.com [@chayesmatthew](#)

Updated December 22, 2021 11:04 PM

A Suffolk judge has dismissed a [\\$10 million lawsuit](#) by a billionaire and his son alleging that a dispute on a South America field trip with the then-17-year-old's East Hampton private school "prevented him from obtaining the full enjoyment of life."

The lawsuit, filed March 23, contends that Hayden Soloviev, a high school junior at the time of the trip last year, continues to endure "suffering that knows no boundaries."

But, even if the allegations are true, the suit must be dismissed because the plaintiff — Hayden and his father, Stefan Soloviev — signed a release upon enrollment with the Ross School covering such trips, according to the [ruling](#), filed Dec. 10 by Supreme Court Judge William J. Condon.

The [lawsuit](#) contends that Hayden was threatened, berated and later bullied into unenrolling after complaining about teacher-chaperones leading peers, all underage, in a whiskey toast to celebrate completion of a South American glacier hike. The post-hike toast is a tradition of sorts in the continent's Patagonia region, with the whiskey cooled with ice hewn from the glacier.

Hayden Soloviev, a former student at the Ross School in East Hampton. Credit: Family photo

Causes of action in the lawsuit include breach of trust and contract, unjust enrichment, negligent hiring and infliction of emotional distress.

Condon wrote that none of the allegations was eligible for litigation in court.

"There are no claims of physical abuse, contact or unwanted approaches of any kind but rather ... a few frustrated words from a teacher who was chaperoning the trip" Condon wrote. "The teacher reassigned an Instagram account of the trip due to plaintiff

Get the Suffolk news this week newsletter!

The biggest news, politics and crime stories in Suffolk County, in your inbox every Friday at noon.

Email address

Sign up

By clicking Sign up, you agree to our [privacy policy](#).

not doing what he was asked for the project."

The judge continued: "Also, the plaintiff claims he has 'suffering that knows no boundaries' and 'prevented him from obtaining the full enjoyment of life' due to watching others drink a thimbleful of celebratory local whiskey upon climbing a glacier."

A copy of the [release](#), signed by the father, is an exhibit in court records: "I release and hold harmless the School [and] its ... employees from all claims, damages, and other liability for injury to the Student where such claims, damages, or other liability are not the result of intentional conduct or gross negligence ..."

Andrew Blum, a family spokesman, said the Solovievs are disappointed in the ruling. [A notice of appeal](#) was filed Wednesday, court records show.

The Ross School, where tuition is said to be \$44,910 for day students, is on about 63 acres out east, enrolls 386 students, including about 75 boarders, the [headmaster](#) told Newsday in March.

Stefan Soloviev is heir to a real estate fortune totaling about \$4.7 billion, according to [a 2019 article in Bloomberg News](#).

The article called him a "self-taught expert on dry-land agriculture" who is also America's 31st-largest land owner.

By Matthew Chayes

matthew.chayes@newsday.com  @chayesmatthew

Matthew Chayes, a Newsday reporter since 2007, covers New York City Hall.

Didn't find what you were looking for?

search newsday.com

