



## **Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) Policy**

Bridge Prep promotes a nurturing school culture that has respect for diversity among students and between students and staff. We provide all students with a supportive and safe environment in which to grow and thrive academically and socially. The ability of students to learn and our ability to educate our students are compromised when students engage in discrimination, harassment, bullying, or intimidating behavior toward other students. These behaviors affect not only the students who are its targets, but also those individuals who participate and witness such acts.

Bullying and harassment can take many forms and includes behavior that targets students because of their actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship/immigration status, religion, creed, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or weight.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is understood to be a hostile activity which harms or induces fear through the threat of further aggression and/or creates terror. In order to facilitate implementation of this policy, provide meaningful guidance and prevent behaviors from rising to a violation of law, this policy will use the term bullying (which is usually subsumed under the term "harassment") to describe a range of misbehaviors such as harassment, hazing, intimidation or discrimination. The accompanying regulation provides more guidance regarding the definition and characteristics of bullying.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination is the act of denying rights, benefits, justice, equitable treatment or access to facilities available to all others, to an individual or group of people because of the group, class or category to which that person belongs (as discussed, under Harassment, below).

### **Harassment**

Harassment has been defined in various ways in federal and state law and regulations. Bridge Prep recognizes that these definitions are important standards, but our goal is to prevent misbehavior from escalating in order to promote a positive school environment and to limit liability. The Dignity for All Students Act (§§10-18 of Education Law) defines harassment as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety.

The harassing behavior may be based on any characteristic, including but not limited to a person's actual or perceived:

- race.
- color,
- weight,
- national origin,
- ethnic group,
- religion,
- religious practice,
- disability,
- sex, sexual orientation, or
- gender (including gender identity and expression).



In some instances, bullying or harassment may constitute a violation of an individual's civil rights.

### **Prevention**

In the school setting, we are provided the opportunity to develop our students into caring, smart well-rounded young people, and our Social Emotional Learning programming and school culture is rooted in respect for others. Our targeted social emotional programming and emphasis exists to not only decrease incidents of bullying, but to help our students learn to develop supportive relationships with one another. Staff are provided with targeted supports to identify the warning signs of bullying, as well as to their responsibility to become actively involved in the prevention of bullying before overt acts occur.

In order to assure the success and fidelity of our Social Emotional programming, the School has a designated DASA Coordinator who works with the entire staff to coordinate the dissemination of information on anti-bullying, implement strategies to prevent bullying, and enforce this policy. The DASA Coordinator meets directly with School Leadership to provide updates and to share concerns or request needed support.

### **Intervention**

Intervention by adults and bystanders is an important step in preventing escalation and resolving issues at the earliest stages. The purpose of intervention, which may involve remediation according to the School's Discipline Code, is to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior and protect and prioritize the safety of the target.

### **Reporting and Investigation**

School employees who witness harassment, bullying or discrimination, or receive oral or written reports of such acts, must promptly orally notify the Executive Director no later than one school day after the employee witness or receives such acts. The Executive Director or their designee will lead or supervise a thorough investigation of all reports of harassment/bullying and discrimination, and ensure the investigation is completed in a timely manner.

When an investigation verifies a material incident of harassment, bullying or discrimination, the Executive Director or their designee will take prompt action, reasonably calculated to end the harassment/bullying or discrimination, eliminate any of the hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety of the student or students against whom such behavior was directed.

The Executive Director or their designee will promptly notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when it is believed that any harassment/bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.

### **Non-Retaliation**

Retaliation by any School employee or student is prohibited against any individual who, in good faith, reports or assists in the investigation of harassment/bullying or discrimination.