

The Dignity for All Students Act: Parents as Partners

Presented By:
East Islip School District Social Workers




the
dignity
for all
students
act

What is the intent of the Dignity for All Students Act?

- ▶ New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) seeks to provide public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function.

The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) defines harassment as the Creation of a Hostile Environment by...

- ▶ Conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for their physical safety...OR
 - ▶ Conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse includes but is not limited to conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
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What is Bullying?



Bullying is a form of harassment, it is unwanted aggressive behavior(s) that:

- ▶ Involves a real or perceived *power imbalance*
- ▶ Is *repeated or has potential to be repeated* over time
- ▶ *Meant to harm* another person either physically or psychologically

Types of Bullying

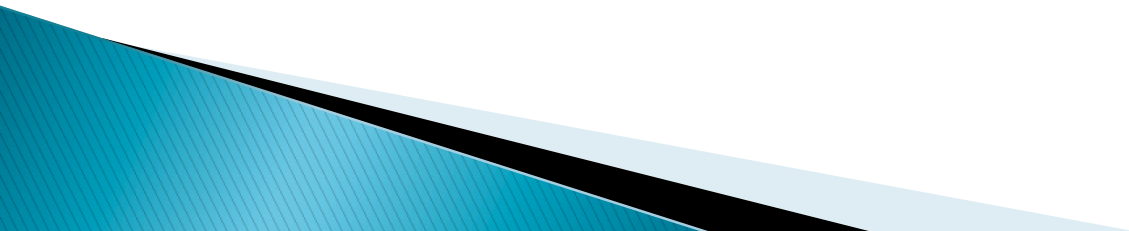
- ▶ **Physical bullying**
 - Punching, shoving, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, acts that hurt people
- ▶ **Verbal bullying**
 - Name-calling, teasing, taunting, making offensive remarks
- ▶ **Indirect bullying**
 - Spreading rumors, excluding, ganging up, embarrassing someone in public
- ▶ **Cyber bullying**
 - Sending insulting messages or threats by email, text messaging, chat rooms, blogs, social media websites



Please consider that...

Not every negative interaction is bullying

Bully or Not



Distinguishing Bullying from Peer Conflict, Accidents, and Misunderstandings

Typical Peer Conflict

1. Equal power between students
2. Students involved may be friends
3. Conflict not pre-meditated and no intention to cause harm
4. Negative actions do not follow a pattern
5. Followed by sincere remorse
6. Interest in repairing relationship
7. Both students play active role
8. Youth supported by other peers

Bullying

1. Imbalance of power
2. No real friendship
3. Negative actions are repeated
4. Actions are purposeful and possible premeditated
5. Bully shifts blame, no sincere remorse
6. No interest in repairing relationship
7. Incident is mostly one sided
8. Target is alone without peer support
9. Intention to gain power, control

Accidents or Misunderstandings

1. Someone says something they didn't know would upset another
2. The person stops when they are asked to
3. A person accidentally bumps into or pushes past another and says "sorry"

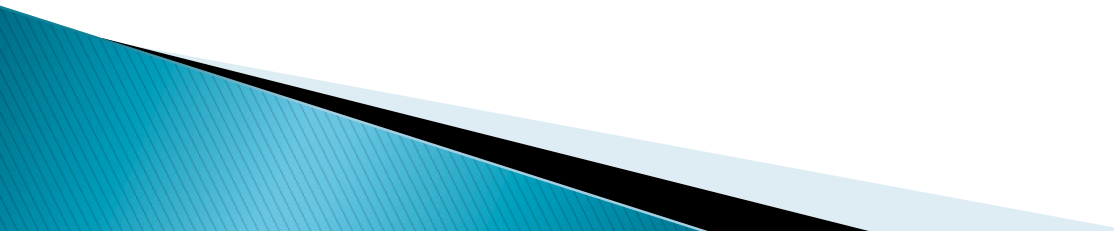
What Our Schools Are Doing to Help a Student Who is Being Harassed or Bullied

- ▶ Presentations have already been made, or will be scheduled at all buildings for all staff.
 - Reminding staff that quick, consistent adult response to bullying or harassment sends a clear message that those behaviors are not acceptable
 - Stressing to staff that modeling respectful behavior when intervening is of the utmost importance
 - Emphasizing that we should not ignore or minimize the situation, or assume that children can work this out on their own
 - Reminding staff to always model respectful behavior in their interactions with students or colleagues

What Our Schools are Doing to Help a Student Who is Being Harassed or Bullied

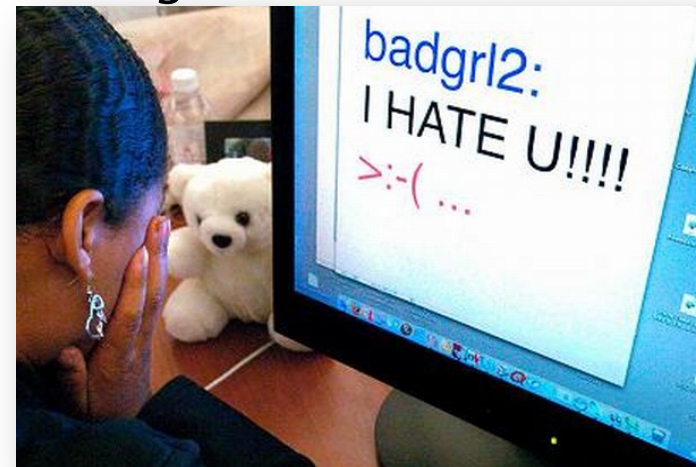
- ▶ **Educating Students about the Dignity Act**
 - Assemblies for reinforcement and acknowledgement of positive choices
 - Small group discussions
 - Teachers are incorporating discussions about character education, civility, and citizenship into their lessons
 - Morning Announcements
 - Exploring additional ways to involve students in leading this initiative

How to Respond if You Think Your Child is Being Targeted

- ▶ Try to not overreact, remain as calm as possible: Your child needs to see a grounded and rational adult (overreacting leads to more anxiety for your child)
 - ▶ Get a sense of the complete picture, not just a snapshot (even if your child is partially at fault)
 - ▶ See how your child defines their role in the situation
 - ▶ Find out what they have tried to stop the bullying
 - ▶ Keep them involved in the solution: This reinstates a sense of power and control
 - ▶ Build a partnership: Joint problem-solving is key! Give their perspective room and respect
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Responding to Cyber Bullying

- ▶ Block all communication from cyber bully(s)
- ▶ Save the evidence
- ▶ Forward emails/texts to service provider/website requesting assistance
- ▶ Encourage your child to take a break
- ▶ Be careful about taking away the privilege as this can send a message that they are being punished for being victimized
- ▶ Contact the police if:
 - Harassment/stalking is relentless
 - If child feels physically threatened

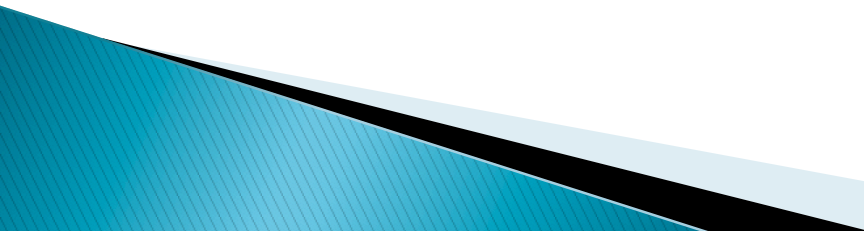


If Your Child is Engaging in Bullying Behavior

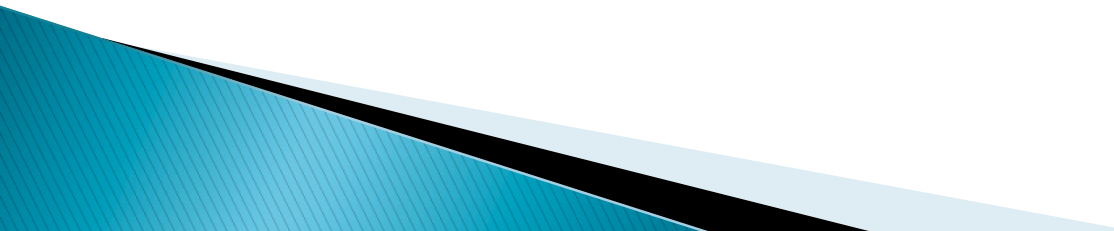
- ▶ Everyone makes mistakes, and that is okay
- ▶ As parents, the goal is to teach our children as many lessons about life as possible
- ▶ We all want our children to learn about cause & effect, and ultimately, about ACCOUNTABILITY
- ▶ See if they can help those who have been targeted, be a mentor, or help make change in the school culture
- ▶ Develop a plan of action to try and alleviate the harm done
- ▶ Let your child know that trust is earned and that they will have to work to earn it back from you

punishment
abuse
responsibility
hate
change
victim
counseling
physical
life
suicide
edge
need
waste
bully
ownership
cyberbullying
verbal
anger
madness
peers
apathy
attention
parents
pushed
bullied
death
sadness

Helping Your Child Choose Beneficial Behaviors

- ▶ Model the behaviors in our words and our actions
 - ▶ Use “genuine dialogue” to discuss issues and share perspectives (This encourages them to share their thoughts with you)
 - ▶ Invite your child to choose appropriate language and ways of handling conflicts that demonstrate respect for others (How would it feel to walk in their shoes?)
 - ▶ When you see incidents of disrespectful behavior on television or encounter it in your day to day experiences, discuss what you see with your children and encourage them to tell you what they think first
 - ▶ Do not put anything on the internet, social media, texting, etc. that you would not want to announce from the rooftops
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Parents as Partners

- ▶ Children are learning through their experiences, and don't always make good choices of behavior
 - ▶ Our goal and responsibility is to help children to self-monitor and learn from their mistakes
 - ▶ We set limits to communicate that life is full of choices and every choice has its consequence
 - ▶ When children understand the reason for limits, they are more likely to accept them
 - ▶ Encourage children to understand where their rights end and others' rights begin
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In Conclusion



- ▶ It is important to keep in mind that when children are bullying or being bullied, they need and deserve adult intervention...kids want intervention and help
- ▶ A true bullying situation is too serious for young kids to handle alone...it won't go away by ignoring it
- ▶ It is our responsibility to convince our children that while they may need to try different strategies to help...the one thing they cannot do is do nothing

- ▶ We have a legal and moral responsibility to help maintain a climate of safety, respect, and responsibility at school
- ▶ We invite students and their families to be positive contributors and say:
 - I AM SAFE
 - I AM RESPECTFUL
 - I AM RESPONSIBLE

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