



Book	Policy Manual
Section	Series 0000 - Goals and Objectives
Title	Dignity For All Students Act
Code	0115
Status	Active
Adopted	July 19, 2012
Last Revised	January 8, 2025

DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

The School District is committed to providing a positive, safe and supportive learning environment where students are free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

“Harassment” and “Bullying” are the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying, that (a) 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 (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property. Acts of harassment and bullying shall include, but not be limited to, those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles such as but not limited to braids, locks, and twists), color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex. For the purposes of this definition the term “threats, intimidation or abuse” shall include verbal and non-verbal actions. In some instances, bullying or harassment may constitute a violation of an individual's civil rights. The School District is mindful of its responsibilities under the law and in accordance with School District policy regarding civil rights protections.

In order to streamline the wording of this policy and regulation, the term bullying will be used throughout to encompass harassment, intimidation, cyberbullying and hazing behaviors.

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

“Cyberbullying” shall mean harassment or bullying as defined above, where such harassment or bullying occurs through any form of electronic communication.

“Hazing” is an induction, initiation or membership process involving harassment which produces public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule or creates a situation where public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule is likely to occur.

The School District aims to foster an educational setting wherein all students are treated with respect and dignity.

The School District acknowledges that bullying and other forms of harassment or discrimination are disruptive and harmful to our students. Because bullying and other forms of harassment or discrimination are detrimental to our learning environment, our sense of community, and an individual's well-being, the School District does not and will not condone

bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any kind. The School District condemns and strictly prohibits all forms of bullying, harassment, and discrimination of students by district employees or students on school property, school buses, or at school functions, regardless of whether they are conducted on or off the premises of the School District. The School District also prohibits all forms of off-campus bullying, harassment, or discrimination including, but not limited to, "cyber-bullying," which may include the use of instant messaging, e-mail, websites, chat rooms, and text messaging, or other forms of electronic communication, or other acts in violation of this policy when such acts occur off school property and create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.

Prevention

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall develop and implement a school strategy to prevent harassment, bullying, and discrimination as well as procedures and guidelines, as needed, to fulfill the purpose of this policy in the School District, including intervention and non-discriminatory instructional and counseling methods and guidelines relating to the development of measured, balanced and age-appropriate responses to instances of harassment, bullying or discrimination by students, with remedies and procedures following a progressive model that makes appropriate use of intervention, discipline and education, vary in method according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors, and are consistent with the School District's Code of Conduct.

The School District shall ensure that the course of instruction in grades kindergarten through twelve includes a component on civility, citizenship, and character education. Such component shall instruct students on the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, and respect for others, with an emphasis on discouraging acts of harassment, bullying, and discrimination, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity, and other traits which will enhance the quality of their experiences in, and contributions to, the community. The component shall support the development of a school environment free of harassment, bullying, and discrimination and shall also include instruction on the safe, responsible use of the internet and electronic communications. For purposes of this policy, "tolerance," "respect for others" and "dignity" shall include awareness and sensitivity to bullying, discrimination, or harassment and civility in the relations of people of different races, colors, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, genders and sexes.

The school setting provides an opportunity to teach children, and emphasize among staff, that cooperation with and respect for others is a key value of the School District. A program geared towards prevention is designed to not only decrease incidents of bullying but to help students build more supportive relationships with one another by integrating the bullying prevention program into classroom instruction. Staff members and students will be sensitized, through district-wide professional development and instruction, to the warning signs of bullying, as well as to their responsibility to become actively involved in the prevention of bullying before overt acts occur.

Curricular material that raises awareness and sensitivity to discrimination or harassment and civility in the relationships of people of different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, sexes or gender expression or identities will be included in the instructional program K-12.

In order to implement this program, the Board of Education will designate at its annual organizational meeting a Dignity Act Coordinator ("DAC") for each school in the School District. One of the DAC's will be designated as the district-wide coordinator whose responsibilities are described in the accompanying regulation. The role of each DAC is to oversee and enforce this policy in the school to which they are assigned.

Intervention

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall develop and implement a school strategy to prevent harassment, bullying, and discrimination as well as procedures and guidelines, as needed, to fulfill the purpose of this policy in the School District, including intervention and non-discriminatory instructional and counseling methods and guidelines relating to the development of measured, balanced and age-appropriate responses to instances of harassment, bullying or discrimination by students, with remedies and procedures following a progressive model that makes appropriate use of intervention, discipline and education, vary in method according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors, and are consistent with the School District's Code of Conduct.

Provisions For Students Who Do Not Feel Safe At School

Any student who believes that he or she is being bullied, harassed, or discriminated against, or who has knowledge of bullying, harassing, or discriminating behavior should report it. Students may make oral or written reports of bullying, harassment, or discrimination to any staff member. The School District acknowledges that, notwithstanding actions taken by School District staff, intervention may require a specific coordinated approach if a student does not feel safe at school. Students who do not feel safe at school are limited in their capacity to learn and reach their academic potential. Staff, when

aware of bullying, should determine if accommodations are needed in order to help ensure the safety of the student and bring this to the attention of the Building Principal or DAC. The Building Principal, other appropriate staff, the student and the student's parent or person in parental relation will work together to define and implement any needed accommodations.

The School District recognizes that there is a need to balance accommodations which enhance student safety against the potential to further stigmatize the targeted student. Therefore, each case will be handled individually. The student, parent/person in parental relation, and school administration will collaborate to establish safety provisions that best meet the needs of the targeted student. Follow-up discussion and/or meetings will be scheduled, as needed, to ensure that safety concerns have been adequately addressed and to determine when and if accommodations need to be changed or discontinued.

Incident Reporting and Investigation

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent of Schools shall ensure that at least one staff member at every school is designated as a Dignity Act Coordinator who is approved by the Board and who will be instructed in the provisions of the Dignity for All Students Act; thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex; and provided training: (1) which addresses the social patterns of harassment, bullying and discrimination, including but not limited to, those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex; (2) in the identification and mitigation of harassment, bullying and discrimination; and (3) in strategies for effectively addressing problems of exclusion, bias, and aggression in educational settings. Each Coordinator shall be employed by the School District and be licensed and/or certified by the Commissioner as a classroom teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, school nurse, school social worker, school administrator or supervisor, or Superintendent of Schools. The name and contact information of the Dignity Act Coordinator shall be disseminated in accordance with state law and the Commissioner's Regulations.

All School District personnel are responsible for taking action if they become aware of any bullying, harassment, or discrimination against a student. Staff members must make an oral report promptly of all complaints of bullying, harassment, and discrimination that they receive from students or others, whether oral or written, as well as any instances of bullying, harassment or discrimination that they are aware of, to the Building Principal or DAC not later than one school day after receipt of a report or witnessing an incident and must file a written report with the Building Principal or DAC no later than two school days after making the oral report.

Bullying, harassment or discrimination of a sexual nature, as defined by the School District's sex-based harassment policy, must be reported to the School District's Title IX officer. Bullying, harassment or discrimination which involves criminal activity, or where there is a reasonable belief that criminal activity may occur, must be immediately reported to the Building Principal or DAC. If the Building Principal or DAC believes that any harassment, bullying, or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct, he/she shall promptly notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency. To the extent possible, allegations of bullying, harassment, or discrimination will be kept confidential; however, the School District reserves the right to disclose the identity of the parties and witnesses in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know.

The Building Principal or DAC will lead the investigation of all reports of harassment, bullying, and discrimination and will ensure each investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report. All reports of bullying, harassment, or discrimination will be thoroughly investigated and prompt action will be taken by the school where the incident occurred to address the verified allegations, including the imposition of appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with applicable law and the School District's Code of Conduct. Actions will be reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying, or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, prevent the recurrence of behavior, and ensure the safety of the student(s) against whom the bullying, harassment or discrimination was directed. Actions shall be consistent with the guidelines created by the School District, in accordance with law and this policy, for measured, balanced, and age-appropriate responses to instances of harassment, bullying, and discrimination.

At all times, complaints will be documented, tracked and handled in accordance with the regulations and procedures accompanying this policy and the School District's Code of Conduct. The DAC or Building Principal will prepare a cumulative semester report to the Superintendent of Schools or designee and the Board of Education on data and trends related to harassment, bullying, and discrimination in their schools based on complaints filed.

An equitable and thorough investigation will be carried out by the DAC or Building Principal in accordance with the accompanying regulation. In addition, the results of the investigation will be reported back to both the targeted students and the accused students as specified in the accompanying regulation. If either of the parties disagrees with the results of the investigation, they can appeal the findings in accordance with the regulations that accompany this policy. Verified bullying incidents that meet the criteria established by the state will be included in the statewide reporting system when applicable, in accordance with law and regulation.

The Board of Education will receive the annual School Safety and Educational Climate Reporting (SSEC), as well as any other state-required report relevant to bullying and/or school climate, for each building and for the School District as whole. Based on the review of the data, the Board of Education may consider further action, including but not limited to modification of this policy and additional training.

Disciplinary Consequences

While the focus of this policy is on prevention, bullying acts may still occur. In these cases, offenders will be given the clear message that their actions are wrong, and the behavior must improve. Offenders will receive in-school guidance in making positive choices in their relationships with others. If appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken by the administration in accordance with the School District's Code of Conduct, as applicable. If the behavior rises to the level of criminal activity, law enforcement will be contacted.

Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying will be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors, and must be consistent with the School District's Code of Conduct.

Non-Retaliation

The School District expressly prohibits any retaliation against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any individuals who initiate, testify, participate, or assist in the investigation of any allegation or report of bullying, harassment, or discrimination. The School District's administrators will monitor participants in investigations and victims of bullying, harassment, or discrimination to ensure that the behavior has ceased, no retaliation has occurred and support or counseling has been afforded to the involved individuals, as needed.

Training

The School District will create guidelines for training and will provide training to staff, in accordance with the requirements of state law and the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, which will include, but not be limited to: raising awareness and sensitivity to potential bullying, harassment or discrimination and the effects of bullying, harassment or discrimination, including cyberbullying, on students; enabling staff to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination; addressing social patterns of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, the identification and mitigation of such acts, and strategies for effectively addressing problems of exclusion, bias and aggression in educational settings; ensuring effective implementation of school policy on conduct and discipline; and including safe and supportive school climate concepts in curriculum and classroom management. The Board of Education recognizes that in order to implement an effective bullying prevention and intervention program, professional development is needed. The Superintendent of Schools or designee, and the district-wide DAC will incorporate training to support this program in new teacher orientation and the annual professional development plan, as needed.

Dissemination, Monitoring and Review

The School District will maintain current versions of this policy on its website and require that at least once during each school year, each school provide its employees, students, parents, and/or persons in parental relation with a written or electronic copy of this policy, or a plain-language summary thereof, including the notification process by which students, parents, persons in parental relation and school employees may report harassment, bullying and discrimination.

The School District will ensure that reporting of information to the public in conjunction with this policy will be in a manner that complies with student privacy rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Each year, as part of the annual review of the Code of Conduct, this policy will be reviewed to assess its effectiveness and compliance with state and federal law. If changes are needed, revisions will be recommended to the Board of Education for its consideration.

In addition, the Board of Education will receive the annual SSEC data report for each building and for the School District as a whole, with particular attention to the trends in the incidence of bullying. Based on the review of the data, the Board of Education may consider further action, including but not limited to modification of this policy and additional training.

The School District shall report material incidents of discrimination and harassment of students to the Department of Education as mandated by the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education but in no case less than on an annual basis.

Legal

8 NYCRR §§ 100.2(c), (jj), (kk)

Dignity for All Students Act, Education Law §10-18

Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 USC §12101 et seq.
Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC §2000d et seq.
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC §2000e et seq.
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.
§504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC §794
Individuals with Disabilities Education Law, 20 USC §1400 et seq.
Executive Law §290 et seq. (New York State Human Rights Law)
Education Law § 3201
Education Law § 313(3)
Education Law § 3201-a

Cross References

[0100 - Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination](#)

[0110 - Sexual Harassment](#)